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A SERIES OF

MEDITATIONS UPON THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

VOL. III.

The Divine Exodus.

BY THE

REV. R. M. BENSON, M.A.

STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD

"*As for thee also, by the Blood of thy Covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.*"—ZECH. ix. 11.

PART II.

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THE FINAL PASSOVER.

THE DIVINE EXODUS.

MEDITATION XXXVI.

Pilate and the Jews.

And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that he himself is Christ a king.—St. Luke xxiii. 2.

And it was early; and they themselves entered not into the palace, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover. Pilate therefore went out unto them, and saith, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If this man were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered him up unto thee. Pilate therefore said unto them, Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law. The Jews said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should die.—St. John xviii. 28–32.

1. The Jews standing without.

The Jews have handed Jesus over to the Gentiles. He is dead to them. They are only anxious to have Him actually put to death.

The Paschal Lamb is given to the Gentiles. The Jews are preparing to eat a Paschal lamb which shall no longer have any efficacy, for the Antitype which they have rejected has taken the place of the type to which they cling.

Probably it is only the leading members of the

faction who have gone with Jesus to Pilate, followed by the mob whom the recent trial has gathered together. The leaders, however—the chief priests' Sadducean clique—are there. They have made arrangements with Pilate to hold an early session of the court, so that all might be despatched before the people at large should get such knowledge of the proceedings as to endanger their safety. They knew that amongst those multitudes there were many who would be ready to take the part of the accused Prophet who had wrought for them, and in their presence, so many wonderful works.

Thus they had received a band of soldiers from Pilate in order to effect the capture by night, and those soldiers having now returned to Antonia, where Pilate resided, he would be expecting to have the Captive brought to him for trial without delay.

Pilate, however, was not prepared to put Jesus to death merely for the gratification of their envy. However little he may have known of the real circumstances of the case, he knew that it was the mere spirit of party which made them so eager for His destruction. It was needful for him, as the administrator of justice, to have some real charge brought forward which would warrant His condemnation.

The Jews, however, seem to have imagined that Pilate was more ready to fall in with their plans than really was the case. They had hurried Jesus away from the mock trial, in which they had condemned Him as guilty of blasphemy, and they thought that Pilate would carry out their sentence without further ado. He, however, was there to administer

justice, and whatever his apprehensions for the coming feast might be, he was not yet so lost to the sense of his duty as to yield to them entire submission.

He was dealing half-heartedly. The Prisoner was waiting before his tribunal, and he was gone out of the court of justice to parley with scrupulous accusers, whom he knew to be actuated only by motives of evil, while yet they had their rules of religion which had now come to be only a pretence.

The trial had not taken him by surprise. It was probably a matter of conversation in his establishment. His wife's dream indicates something of the excitement of feeling upon the occasion. He had put himself into the position to be a tool, but he could not abnegate his personal responsibility in the final issue. In the matter itself he had no interest, but he was anxious to act not for simple truth and justice, but so as to satisfy a malevolent and powerful faction.

O Jesu, grant that I may ever bear in mind that all my acts are done towards Thee, so that I may never suffer myself to be carried away by the machinations of the wicked.

My son, thou must in all things consider the end from the very beginning, lest thou be unable to stay thyself. Consider to what great results of blessing thou will be led if thou art faithful to Me in the beginning, and to what great consequences of evil thou will surely be driven if thou art forgetful of Me. Think not that the matter is likely to turn out this way or that.

Think not that thou canst order it as thou wilt. But think that I am the true Object of thine actions, and that they are to be measured by the dignity of My Person. In all truth I am the Truth; and all thy conduct gains its eternal character from its relation to Me. Thou mayest not know how I am present, but in every failure of righteousness thou art joining in an act of rebellion against Me.

O Lord Jesu, would that I could always behold Thee present, however hidden, amidst the events of daily life. Surely earth would be as heaven; all would be righteousness, being done to Thee, and all would be joy, being blest by Thee.

2. The Absence of Accusation.

Pilate desired that they should bring some charge against Jesus. Evidently he was only too ready even from the first to act so as to please them, even upon a trifling charge; but when he said, 'What evil hath He done?' they could only say, 'If He were not a malefactor, we would not have brought Him unto thee.' The charge of blasphemy would weigh little with Pilate. They had hurried away from their own court, hoping that Pilate would yield to their wishes. Pilate, however, tells them to judge Him according to their law. He knew that time had not yet sufficiently elapsed for them to have carried out any real examination. The Prisoner was standing in court before his empty seat, and he must have some grounds of inquiry in order to investigate His guilt.

Consider that empty chair of judicial power before which Jesus, surrounded by the Roman soldiers, is waiting in the Prætorium. Consider the eager demand of the Jews outside. Consider Pilate, vacillating between his sense of duty, and his fear that this Prisoner might be an occasion of trouble to him during the feast if any strife arose between the High Priest's party and the multitude who had come up from the country, who filled the suburbs with the praises of the Prophet.

'What evil hath He done? What accusation do ye bring against Him?'

The world is ever ready to condemn Jesus and His Church rather upon apprehension than upon fact. The evils which it imputes are evils originating with itself, so that it is the world which is guilty, and not Christ. Justice, however, demands some definite accusation. No just condemnation can issue upon mere generalities.

The Jews, however, did not wish to implicate themselves by any definite charge which might be disproved, and lead to the escape of Jesus. It was a strange state of things, when even those who prosecuted Jesus could find no charge to bring up against Him. Pilate asks for some one charge. The Jews can only say, 'If He were not doing evil, we would not have brought Him to thee.'

Already they had made offers if people would come forward to get Him condemned, but all has failed. Where should we find a greater proof of absolute innocence? Many charges of guilt might be brought forward through misrepresentation against

the best of men. What must that life have been which was so incapable even of misrepresentation, although spent in such continual publicity!

O Jesu, alas that I should be tempted to surrender Thee to the world! What accusation can I bring against Thee as an excuse for my unfaithfulness? Indeed, Thou hast a claim upon my entire submission. The world in its falseness may wish me to turn against Thee with accusation, but Thou art, indeed, without fault. It is the world which doeth evil. Thou art pure.

My son, let the consciousness of My purity keep thee from all connivancce with the sinful world. Whenever thou art tempted to forsake Me and follow the world, hear the voice of Justice saying, 'Why? What evil hath He done?' See how I have suffered, and learn to accept suffering along with Me rather than attempt to injure Me without cause.

Jesu, indeed Thou hast a claim upon me which I cannot deny. Thou art the Truth, and I cannot be untrue to Thee without setting myself against the truth. It is not wonderful that the evil world should seek Thine overthrow. The world is evil because it is opposed to Thee. Thou, the Creator and Lawgiver of the world, art the Law of all goodness and truth for all the world. The world complains of Thee because its deeds are evil and its desires are evil. Why should I fear to bear the hatred of the world, if only I may live in Thy truth and love?

3. The Eager Demand for Crucifixion.

Pilate bade the Jews judge Jesus according to their law, but they said that it was not lawful for them to put any man to death. No conviction short of death would satisfy them.

How little did they understand that, in thus requiring the Romans to crucify Jesus, they were accomplishing the words of their prophets! They were hurried blindly on by hate.

How needful was this death! Without it we had all been left in that death wherein we were born. Yet they desired the death of Jesus, not that He might give them life, but that they might remain in that state of death wherein they were. They desired the death of Jesus because they dreaded the life which Jesus came to give. That life involved their dying to their earthly desires, and they would sooner die eternally than renounce the desires which could only end in death. They looked for a Messiah who should bring earthly prosperity. Therefore they hated Jesus, whose kingdom was not of this world.

O how many there are who desire the death of Jesus now! How is it with myself? It is not only in one way, but in many ways, that we desire to get rid of Jesus. Our dearest earthly hopes must be sacrificed to Him, if we would not part from Him.

Yes, and we bring Jesus as it were before the Roman governor. We try and get His claims set aside upon the score of natural justice. We refuse to recognize the Divine claims of Jesus in earthly

matters and personal acts of discipline. We feel that we have no right to set aside certain duties of our own free will. We desire the world's morality to carry out the sentence of our own private desires and passions. Worldly passion, unbelieving violence, superstitious scruples, will all appeal to justice for the condemnation of Jesus, in order to get free from those supernatural claims which they know they have no right to disregard.

Jesus must indeed die, and the faithful will praise God for His death. But the faithful praise God because they die along with Him! His death sweetens all the deadness of their present estate, and changes the dark grave into a chamber of eternal light.

Why is Jesus to die? What evil is He doing? Surely He is bearing our sins. It is the chastisement of our guilt which is upon Him, not His own. He dies for our sins. That is the only answer which we can make to Pilate. No sentence of death could issue against Him from any tribunal of God or man for that which He has done. He is to die because He loved us.

What then? Shall justice become an accomplice with hatred in putting Jesus to death? Human justice cannot do this, since there is no accusation. Divine justice cannot do this, for He is the Object of the Father's love. It is His own love which shall respond to the powerless efforts of human hatred in laying down a life which no man can take from Him. Divine justice requires the death of sinful man. Divine love will reward the willing sacrifice whereby

Jesus, the All-Holy One, dies at the hands of sinful man to make the atonement between God and sinners.

O Jesu, Thine enemies are eager for Thy death; but Thou art even yet more eager to die, that Thou mayest make them Thy friends.

My son, art thou grateful for My death as Mine enemies were eager for it? Take their evil passions as a measure of what thine own desires should be, illuminated and enkindled by My Holy Spirit. Art thou grateful as they were eager? Yea, more; art thou eager to receive as I Myself was eager to give?

O Jesu, how can I attain to such eagerness? How can I show it?

My son, it is by the Holy Ghost whom I give to thee that thou mayest attain; but if thou wouldst show thine eagerness, thou must be as diligent to follow Me in dying to the world as Mine enemies were diligent in persecuting Me to drive Me to death. How they laboured all the night to compass My destruction! Thou too must labour through all the night-time of this evil world, that thou mayest show thy gratitude to Me, and lay hold upon eternal life.

O Lord Jesu, alas that Thine enemies should be so eager and Thy loved ones so remiss! O Jesu, as I follow Thee into the presence of the Father, I seem to hear the voice of Divine Justice crying out, 'Why should this one not die? What hath he done to save

himself from his natural doom?' And that voice of Divine Justice makes answer to itself within the chamber of my heart, and it is the answer which the hosts of heaven applaud as they hear Thy voice, so just, so loving, echoing from the faithful breast: 'He must not die, for I have died, and he hath died with Me. He hath done nothing, but I have done all.' O blessed Jesu, fill my heart with gratitude, mine eyes with tears, my soul with earnest longing, and every impulse of my nature with holy hope, that I may be Thine in time and to eternity.

MEDITATION XXXVII.

The King of the Jews.

Now Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.—St. Matt. xxvii. 11.

And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest. And the chief priests accused him of many things.—St. Mark xv. 2, 3.

And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest.—St. Luke xxiii. 3.

Pilate therefore entered again into the palace, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered, Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then?—St. John xviii. 33-37.

1. The Rebel King.

The Jews brought forward Jesus before Pilate upon a charge of treason. Jesus claimed to be the King of the Jews.

The charge was true, but they aggravated it by a falsehood. Pilate knew with how much reluctance the Jews paid their tribute. The accusation only

made him the more sensible of the envy and party spirit which really caused this effort of the Sanhedrists to destroy Jesus. They would, indeed, make it appear that Jesus was endeavouring to put Himself at the head of a national party in opposition to the imperial claims. His wondrous entrance into the city a few days ago would be a special manifestation to which they could point. Doubtless the throngs on that occasion who accompanied Him were Jews from distant parts rather than from Jerusalem. They were the results of His Galilæan ministry.

'We found this Man subverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that He Himself was Christ a King.'

This was, of course, a perversion of His answer when they sought to entrap Him, on Tuesday last, into some such declaration against the lawfulness of the tribute. He had expressly enforced the duty of submission to Cæsar in matters which belonged to him. His royal procession might well have suggested that question which these intriguing politicians had put, but His answer left no opening for the accusation.

Pilate doubtless saw clearly through their artifice. The charge, however, was one that he could deal with. He therefore went into the Prætorium, and summoned Jesus before himself, with the question, 'Art Thou the King of the Jews?'

The question in the mind of Pilate would admit of a threefold answer. Jesus might be a religious maniac, acting as the Jews had asserted, but altogether beneath the consideration of justice. Of such

a one he had no fear. He could already see enough of the movement to be sure that it had not the strength belonging to many such turbulent uprisings of the fanatical people. Probably he would even welcome such an idle effort, as giving opportunity for the government to assert its power with more crushing persistency.

The question would also assume a higher meaning, as Pilate gazed upon that Form which stood before him, so dignified, bearing such marks of mysterious majesty in the midst of surroundings of contumely and degradation. Jesus might claim to be the Heir of David. Yet, again, as Pilate knew the expectation which the Jews still cherished of a Divine Prophet-King, he would understand that Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah with a direct mission from God.

Consider the supercilious smile with which Pilate addresses Him, as if He were a maniac. 'Art *Thou* the King of the Jews?—Thou!' The sneer gave emphasis to the absurdity of such a claim being made by One so powerless, friendless, helpless.

Quickly was he brought out of any such delusion. The answer of Jesus was not the reply of a maniac boasting of a fancy title; it was an appeal to the judicial conscience. 'Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me?'

The judge who had spoken in the insolent pride of power was hushed, overawed, cowed, by the unprotected Prisoner who stood before him.

Pilate felt that Jesus was reading his heart. He knew himself to be acting not in his own con-

scientious discharge of duty for the maintenance of peace, but as the mouthpiece of others. He had come in from holding conference with those whom he had abetted in the apprehension of Jesus, and now he could only say what they put into his mouth. Jesus was not apprehended by the government upon this charge, but the charge was invented by a party notorious for their own disaffection, as an excuse for judicial proceedings against an object of spite.

Pilate says without flinching that so it is. His angry tone shows that he felt the rebuke. The nation of the Jews, with the chief priests at their head, have delivered Jesus up to him. 'What hast Thou done?' It is the avowal of judicial impotence. 'I have no case against Thee before me. I can trust Thee to tell me the truth in this matter. Art Thou the King of the Jews?' So does the dignity of Jesus seem to call forth a moral sense in the bewildered governor.

O Jesu, how is it with myself when I consider Thy claims, Thy Church, Thy Word? Do I come as an inquirer with a personal interest, really anxious to know Thy truth; or do I come forward as one agitated by the mere controversies of the day? Do I echo the scoffing captiousness of people round about me; or am I speaking as one who really belongs to Thy nation, and ought to look to Thee as the King?

Aye, My son, consider this well with thine own self. If thou askest the question in all sincerity, thou shalt find Me ready to answer; but if thou treatest questions which refer to My

personal claims as if they were merely matters of intellectual subtlety, so that the controversial ability of man may give advantage now to one side and now to the other, then think not that I will answer thee. Listen to Me, and I will lead thee onward in moral truth and perception.

Yea, Lord, my mind is indeed often bewildered by that which others say concerning Thee, but my heart looks to Thee to make all plain. Thou alone canst make me know Thy truth. Speak Thou in my heart. Answer me by Thine own self according to the fulness of thy love. Let worldly-minded Jews stand without. Behold me here alone with Thine own self. Thou didst stand before the judgment-seat of Pilate, bound as a Prisoner. Not so is it now. I stand before Thy judgment-seat, where Thou, at the right hand of God, dost summon every conscience to inquire of Thee by the power of the Holy Ghost. There I look to Thee, even as I shall look to Thee in the judgment of the last great day. Surely Thou art the King of the Jews, and Thou callest me into Thine immediate Presence, that in personal homage I may own Thee as my true King; not merely as those who stand outside with hatred in their hearts, but as one desiring to be taught by Thine own lips, that I may serve Thee in the reality of Thy love, and may be accepted of Thee among Thy faithful people.

2. The Heir of David.

Pilate might well consider the claim of Jesus to be the King of the Jews as the Heir of David. This

would be in his eyes no fanatical pretence, but a legitimate assertion of a royal inheritance; such, however, as need afford him no anxiety, for the poor Representative of that powerful monarchy could only be one of the many whom the Roman power had swallowed up. We know how at a later period some members of our Lord's family were brought up in like manner and dismissed as beneath consideration.

Consider the feeling of sympathy and reverence for ancient power which would stir the heart of Pilate as he passed from the sneer at the fanatic to contemplate the dignity which spread itself around the fallen Monarch, while the sneer would rest upon the blinded multitude outside, who, though so ready to rise in rebellion, were so incapable of appreciating the true dignity of their great monarch's lineal Representative. We may be sure that Pilate had a deep consciousness of the reverence due to Jesus. One in his position could scarcely fail to appreciate the inherent supremacy which no disguise of external calamity could obliterate. He was accustomed to read the face of kings; and now the King of kings stood before him, representing a sovereignty which made the present empire of Rome seem but an upstart, while even the best and earliest germinations of Roman power lost their semblance of antiquity before a Personality so feeble in its present appearance, but so imperishable in its mysterious vitality. He may have felt that in some way the poor dethroned King would outlive an empire founded upon military violence. He could reverence the

impalpable moral dignity which surpassed all outward state, but for the present moment there was no fear.

Pilate could doubtless well appreciate the pride of birth which would naturally belong to such an inheritance, but in the Form which stood before him he saw something very different from pride. He saw the self-consciousness of majesty, but along with that the meekness of One so truly great that no earthly considerations could ruffle the calmness of His self-possession.

Consider Pilate thus taking an estimate of the Heir of David, and in so doing feeling himself drawn beyond the mean ambition and the pride of earthly kings to contemplate the sublime sovereignty of the Son of man. He sees before him an abstract sovereignty. The Prophet assumes in his eyes an entirely new character now that the Jews have charged Him with claiming a kingdom. He cannot deny the claim. He asks, 'Art Thou the King of the Jews?' and Jesus answers him, 'Thou sayest it.'

There was in Jesus the inalienable sovereignty of the Son of man, the Son of David, the chosen Head of the chosen race—a sovereignty which, as it had descended to Him, was to live on for ever. The throne of David was to be an eternal throne; for, in the Person of Jesus, David was to reign upon the throne of heaven, at the right hand of God, for ever and ever.

Do I recognize Jesus as still exerting over myself this glorious sovereignty? It is a sovereignty which cannot be handed over to any other. Do I feel that Jesus at the right hand of God is still

personally ruling His Church and myself as an individual member thereof? O how does our conception of the kingdom of Christ rise in stupendous exaltation when we do feel that it is the great Communion of Saints, livingly ruled by our Lord Jesus Christ in His own Person, so that the accidents of time are of little account, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it! O, do I really know Jesus as the King of the Jews, whose sovereignty includes all nations?

Jesu, open the eyes of my understanding to contemplate the glory wherein Thou reignest.

My son, thou must behold the glory of My kingdom as it is set forth by Mine Apostle. Behold Me with all the company of heaven who wait around My throne. This kingdom has grown from the beginnings of David's boyhood. As he was following the sheep I took him. See thou how in this kingdom the small things of earth shall grow to the glory of heaven. All that is taken up into the kingdom of David shall live with the glory of My Incarnation. Seek not any great things for thyself in this world which perisheth, but seek the promises which are summed up in My Person, the sure mercies of David.

O Lord, how full of glory are those promises which come to us in Thee! When I consider the taking of the manhood into God, and the elevation of David's sovereignty to the infinite glory of the Eternal,

how can I let my heart rest upon any earthly manifestation, or long for any greatness which this world can show? Indeed, I acknowledge Thee as reigning still over the chosen people; yea, and lifting up Thy people to reign along with Thyself.

3. The Messianic King.

Pilate did not only look back to David's throne as a grand phenomenon of the past. He was aware of the Jewish expectation of Messiah's coming reign. It is a great crisis to which he is now being subjected. Can he accept the Son of David who stands before him as the Messiah that is to be?

His political keenness would enable him to recognize the royal bearing of Jesus, worthy to be the Heir of such a line. There is a further intuition necessary. Can he acknowledge the Divine power which guards the Person of Jesus, and ensures in Him the fulfilment of the Messianic hopes?

The Jews had, indeed, made it more difficult for Pilate to rise up to a conception of this kingdom, because they themselves had misrepresented it, as if it implied a resuscitation of their national splendour, so that the Jewish nation should rise to tyrannize over the other nations of the world. They had lost sight of what should be the true glory of Messiah's kingdom—that all the nations of the world should be blessed therein. They had made the substantive, the infinite, depend upon the perishing or the accidental; the glory of the eternal on the manifestation of the temporal.

Pilate needed some teacher to bring the truth home to his consciousness. That Teacher was close at hand. Consider, however, how Pilate could regard Jesus as he asked the question, 'Art Thou the King? Art Thou the Messiah that is to be?' The very question implies a certain opening of the moral understanding. Can it be that the Divine power will raise this feeble but noble Personage to the dignity which the nation expects? Pilate knew the changeableness of earthly power. Himself a creature of one who was now disgraced, he knew that mere external power resting upon earthly agencies may collapse at any moment. He would, indeed, perceive that it was idle to fight against destiny, and the thought would not make him anxious to crush One who in His present position was absolutely powerless. The superstitious Jews were more ready to fight against God than he was, because they felt themselves engaged in a holy war. Superstition dazzles and leads the mind astray by the very semblance of spiritual power which it assumes. The Jews, therefore, imagined themselves to have Divine rights, and to be able in a sort of way to dictate what should be the Divine law of battle. Pilate, as a man of the world, having nothing to do with spiritual aims, might recognize the possibility of destiny accomplishing things that he could not withstand; but he had to deal with man according to present circumstances. He did not care to calculate upon Divine contingencies.

Consider, then, how Pilate looked upon Jesus as he asked Him whether He were the King. A Divine

destiny rose up into the midst of earthly change. Shall his heart yield the homage which such a vision demands? Or shall he settle down into the routine of power, and let the vision pass away?

Consider thyself. Dost thou put the idea of Jesus and destiny far away from thee? Or dost thou welcome the weakness of Jesus, so as to set aside the glory of the world in the joyous consciousness of His Divine life and power? Has thy heart ever opened to the vision of the glory of Jesus rising out of poverty, scorn, reproach, misrepresentation, hatred? Has it then turned away from these to seek the world's gifts?

O Jesu, truly Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel, Thou art the Christ. Suffer not the deceits of the world to lure me away from Thy kingdom and glory. I look not for any earthly glory to enshrine Thy triumph, but for the heavenly glory to enshrine and glorify Thine earthly weakness. As it has been, so shall it be. Thy glory puts forth its Divine life in that which man despises. Never let me seek Thee for any outward gifts, but teach me joyfully to accept whatever Thou givest, praise or blame, riches or poverty, strength or weakness, because it is Thine, and Thy gifts bind me to Thyself.

Live thus in Me, and all shall be well. My kingdom is a kingdom of life, and they who are dead to this world live to Me. Live to Me, and thou shalt live in Me. Turn not away from Me to the world, else shalt thou die.

O Jesu, Thou art anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, and the Spirit of life which is in Thee Thou givest to all Thy people. Grant that, by that Spirit which rests upon Thee, I may grow up to the glory of Thy heavenly truth, in the fulness of wisdom, understanding, fear, and holy love. Truly Thou art the Christ in whom all the nations of the world shall be blessed. Let me not fail of Thy blessing. Surely Thou who didst stand before the judgment-seat of Pilate, vouchsafest even to stand before me, that I may choose Thee in Thy weakness, and may be accepted of Thee in Thy strength.

My son, look forward to the glory of My kingdom. It shall not fail thee, if now thou will be true.

Yea, Lord, Thou art the Christ, anointed with the oil of joy and gladness above Thy brethren. Great is the joy of those who know Thy Name. Blessed are those who share Thy life. Help me to follow Thee, bearing my cross. So may I also follow Thee when Thou comest into Thy kingdom, and the glory of the life wherein Thou art exalted shall compass me. The kingdom is from Thee and in Thee. It is Thine. Thou reignest alone. The kingdom is summed up in Thine own Person, and those who own Thee as their King shall reign with Thee in the indissoluble life whereinto Thou gatherest all Thy beloved.

MEDITATION XXXVIII.

The Kingdom of Truth.

Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.—St. John xviii. 37.

1. The Unearthly Kingdom.

The mind of Pilate had probably been rising towards the idea of Messiah's kingdom as a possible development of destiny; but if he is to accept that idea in its truth, he must go beyond the conventionalities of Jewish pride. The kingdom of Christ is a mystical kingdom—in this world but not of it. We may assume that Pilate's mind was very nearly rising up to the thought. Our Lord did not willingly speak words which would drive the hearer back from Him. He speaks so that those who will consider what He says, pondering it in their hearts, may be led to the appreciation of something beyond their present attainment; and He knows the capacity of every person. He spoke to Pilate, knowing that Pilate had sufficient capacity to receive the truth if he were willing.

Jesus claims to be the King of the Jews, the Heir of David, the promised Messiah; but not like those who headed Messianic movements with the

approval of the chief priests. He did not come to win the kingdom by earthly violence. Nay! this was the very ground of antagonism between Himself and the Jewish party. Pilate asked what He had done, plainly considering that He must have done something to estrange His own nation from Him. This, then, He declares to be the ground of estrangement. The Jewish expectation was of an earthly kingdom. His kingdom was an unearthly one.

It was a great declaration to set before Pilate. Can Pilate accept the idea of a kingdom so opposed to every idea of Roman empire? Rome sought for the empire of the world. Here is the Claimant of a kingdom altogether transcending the limits of earth, although manifested within it. His kingdom is not of the world. It does not gather force by human strength, but by human weakness. It is a living power inherent in His own Person.

Pilate might, indeed, have learnt from the very operations of the physical world that vital energy begins with what is imperceptible. The growth of the spiritual kingdom of Christ is true to this law of nature. The Son of God did not assume human nature in a developed form, but His Divine Person and Life were united with our nature in the earliest form of human existence, for He was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Blessed Virgin.

As was its origin, so is its progress. Not being of this world, it is not, it cannot be, advanced by the power of this world. Its spiritual power must always be independent of the earthly power with

which it may be associated. Its earthly power must be entirely subject to its spiritual vitality.

Nor is it that the spiritual power is to command and the earthly power to execute. The two are linked in a living form which separates from the world what is absorbed into itself. The earthly power is not to be as a coat of armour enclosing a spiritual presence, but a living organism corresponding the more delicately with the spiritual personality in proportion as it is attenuated and enfeebled.

This was the idea which the Jew could not accept. He wished to see the earthly structure of Judaism revive by a Messianic inspiration, as a scaffolding for illumination might rise to a blaze of light by the touch of external flame kindling its extinguished lamps. This was not to be. The tree of Jesse had been cut down, and it was to grow up by a shoot springing from its roots as from a dry ground.

Will Pilate now accept the idea of an unearthly kingdom, casting aside the idea of worldly power which has hitherto been the ruling aim of his life? It was a great possibility which was thus offered to what was possibly a great mind. We may well believe that Pilate, having been chosen for this great crisis, was a man of more than ordinary moral power and perception. He was not chosen because he was a bad man, but because he was capable of rising up to more than ordinary excellence. The early stages of his conversation with Jesus seem to imply this. But can he rise to the supernatural? That is the question which is now before him. Has he merely

the nobility fitted for earthly power, or has he the sublimity fitted for accepting what is Divine?

How many men of high character become wrecked upon the same rock! They can welcome the supernatural as an extension of the natural, but they cannot accept it truly; for such acceptance involves the loss of the natural in the supernatural. This is the necessary law. We do not rise up truly to the supernatural unless we rise up to it in its simplicity as all-sufficient. The supernatural ceases to be, if it cannot act in its own strength.

O Jesu, Thou art the Creator of this outward universe, but Thy kingdom is not derived from it. Thou hast formed it that Thou mayest exhibit therein the spiritual powers inherent in Thyself. Thou derivest no power or glory from that wherein Thou dost show forth Thy working. Help me to look up to Thee with an entire confidence. Never let me acknowledge any power but from Thee and in Thee. All outside of Thee is feeble and false.

My son, thou must look up steadfastly to the glory of the Father, for at His right hand is the throne of My power. Be not deceived by any appearances of this lower world, so as to measure the successes of My kingdom by what thou seest here below. Remember how I warned My people of old that I was going up on high to receive My kingdom, and that I would return to punish all such as would not submit to My sovereignty. I have no other

kingdom, and those whom I call into My kingdom must leave the world if they are to be partakers of My heavenly power.

Lord Jesu, I know that the kingdom of heaven belongs only to those who are poor in spirit. Give me this poverty, I beseech Thee, that I may never be distressed at any outward necessity from which Thy Church is suffering upon the earth, but may always rest satisfied in Thy power to manifest Thyself amidst every difficulty.

My son, behold Me in the nakedness of the Cross whereby I would make My kingdom to be felt in the world; and as was its beginning so shall be its progress.

Yea, Lord, I am sure that the glory of this world does but obscure the majesty which belongs to Thee. Show Thyself in the truth of Thy Divine power, and open our hearts to recognize the truth which Thou revealest.

O My son, how has My kingdom in the world been impeded because My people have relied upon the power of the world! O, if they had relied upon Me, they would have found that poverty is the true riches, and that those help to extend My kingdom who die with Me upon the Cross. My kingdom is not from hence, nor is it to be found here below. Those who die to the earth live with Me in My glory, and through their poverty and death I make My glory manifest.

O Lord, pardon the earthliness of my imaginations.

Purify my heart from all reliance upon earthly things. Blessed be Thy Name that Thou hast called me away from earthly things. So fix my heart upon Thyself that I may not be solicitous of any earthly results. My one desire is for Thy kingdom to come, when Thou shalt make all earthly things to pass away.

2. Its Peaceful Character.

Pilate must probably have heard of the miracle which Jesus had recently wrought, when he restrained Peter from using the sword. Doubtless one great reason of that miracle was that it might show evidently that our Lord did not look to earthly power, but that His kingdom was to be established by meekness in the power of the Spirit of God.

To this, therefore, Jesus refers, saying that if His kingdom were of this world, His subordinate officers, His Apostles, would have fought to prevent His being apprehended by the Jews. He implies that the supernatural power of His kingdom is not such as to give success to imperfect instrumentality, but rather it is such as to supersede all earthly means of violence. The power of this kingdom is Divine in its substance, and not merely in its proportion. There might be a proportionate manifestation of Divine power for the children of the earth. For them God might multiply human resources. But the kingdom of Christ does not grow by the multiplication of earth. It grows by the manifestation of heaven.

This lesson was an important one for Pilate to learn, and Pilate accepted it. He was hereby fully

convinced that our Lord's claim to be a King did not in any way imperil the security of the Roman empire. He might fail of seeing what the kingdom of Christ really was, but he could see that it was not a kingdom which should measure its strength against the kingdoms of this world. It belonged to another sphere.

O that we could learn this lesson as readily as he did!

We must never measure the power of the Church by the resources which she has at her command, but rather by the powers which she has to combat. We are not to think that her powers will be equal to those of her enemies, so that she can beat them down by any worldly weapons, whether of political power, or money, or intellect, or oratory. The opposition of her enemies will evoke from within the Church victorious powers of a kind altogether distinct from earth. As she suffers, so will the Spirit of God triumph within her. The subordinate officers of Christ in His kingdom do not fight, but die.

The victory of the Church in the world is in this respect true to the law upon which God has created the universe. Even in the external sphere of life, higher powers conquer lower orders of power by being themselves made captive. *Græcia capta ferum captorem cepit.* This identity of principle is an evidence of the Christian Church having its origin from the same Divine Author, by whom the world was created. Only, as is natural, the law operates much more perfectly in this higher sphere than in lower organizations.

The growth of the Church is not a mere extension of Christian doctrines or principles, but of Divine life. This Divine life does not conquer and inspire the world by remoulding the world, so that the world may take possession of it; but it takes possession of the world, and by so doing remoulds it. It thus fulfils our Lord's parables of the seed and of the leaven. The earthly power is not the instrument of its growth, but the sphere which its own inherent developing power subdues.

O Jesu, how mean and grovelling are my thoughts —so ready to look to worldly power, so timid when the powers of the world are against me! O let my heart rise up to the fulness of Thy Divine power, that all which is of earth may perish, and Thy Divine glory may be manifested thereby.

My son, keep thyself aloof from all the powers of the world. I will be with thee and multiply thee.

Yea, Lord, I trust in Thee alone. Thy promises are sure, and Thou art Thyself the Portion of mine inheritance and of my cup. The world cannot help me against the world, but the world cannot hinder the triumph of Thy grace. O Lord, raise up Thy power, and with great might succour Thy Church. Blessed be Thy Name for the weakness wherein we find ourselves; for as our weakness is in the world, even so shall be that strength which we have in Thee.

3. Bearing Witness unto the Truth.

Jesus is thus leading Pilate upward to the apprehension of the truth. But Pilate is not prepared to follow. Jesus has told him that His kingdom is not of this world. He seems to have accepted that statement. But now He tells him what His kingdom is. Pilate is not prepared to accept the reality of the Divine Substance, as a practical power wherein to act. 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for.' Pilate does not rise up to this active faith. He could perhaps accept the supernatural nature of the gods in the gods, but he could not accept the idea of the supernatural power of God absorbing man into itself, and working through man without destroying man.

This faith cannot be accepted unless the doctrine of the Incarnation be grasped in its integrity. The kingdom of Christ is founded upon the Person of Christ, and so our Lord reveals Himself in His two natures. As the prophet said of old, 'To us a Child is born as Man; to us a Son, the Son of God, is given,' so now Jesus says, 'To this end was I born as Man in the world, and for this purpose came I forth into the world from the glory of the Father, that I might bear witness unto the truth.'

One who was merely born in the world could not have organized a kingdom which was not of the world. The kingdom belongs to another world, and He who founds it here must come from that glory where its power resides. No one but the Son

of God could give the Divine Sonship, or found the Divine Kingdom upon earth.

God is Truth; the world is only phenomenal. God is Eternal Truth; the world is ever unstable. 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,' has come to reveal the Father; to make known to us, creatures though we be of time and change, the glory of the Eternal, the Unchangeable. This is that which the human heart cannot conceive. Herein the religion of Christ, as the one true substantive, living religion in the world, differs from all other religions, however sublime their teachings may be and however much of truth they may possess. The religion of Christ is not the approach of man to God, but of God to man. 'God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.' Man cannot rise above the world in which he is born. All religions are false which rest upon such human elevation by human power. Christ is come forth from God to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We in His kingdom are in Him that is true. Other religions may have the truth of the letter, but the Christian Church alone can approach God in spirit and in truth.

Pilate exclaimed, 'What is truth?' He was bewildered. We need not think that he spoke in jest or scorn. He probably felt that truth was a great reality, but too great for him!

The closeness of his approximation to the truth was the very ground of his condemnation. He felt the power of heaven. He chose the power of earth. He was content to think that what was beyond him

was not necessary to him, that he might be content to act upon a lower line of conduct than that which had been opened up to him by the words of Jesus. He soon found that to reject truth was equivalent to becoming the antagonist of truth. If he would not serve the truth, he must yield it up and perish in struggling with it.

Consider whether thou art suffering Divine truth to shine out before thee and disappear. Dost thou look to any power in the world as the guarantee of truth, or dost thou look to Jesus at the right hand of God, that He, the faithful and true Witness, may Himself bear witness to the truth in thy heart?

O Jesu, lift up my heart to the glory of the Father, that I may be set free from all the illusions of this lower world. Quicken me with the love of the truth, that in the vision of Thy glory I may find my satisfaction.

Open thine eyes to heavenly things, and I will give thee power to discern them more and more; but see that thou turn not away from Me to any earthly object, for thou will surely find that if thou turnest away from Me, thou makest the very truth to be thine enemy.

O Jesus, what is truth? Pilate waited not for an answer; but Thou seest me prostrate at Thy feet, seeking to be taught by Thee.

Yea, My son, and thou shalt be taught. More and more shalt thou learn what truth is, if thou will persevere, waiting upon Me.

My Holy Spirit shall lead thee into all truth, but thou must be content to follow. The way of truth lies in the midst of many difficulties. Think not that the truth can be accepted in a moment. Thou shalt find the calm vision of the truth when thou hast triumphed over the bewilderments of earthly judgment. Thou shalt know the truth when thou art perfected in the likeness of God.

O Jesu, Thou art the true God. Grace and truth are come by Thee. Thy witness is the stay of my soul. Here in this world let me accept the witness which by Thy sacred Passion Thou hast borne, and so grant me, in the discipline of Thy Cross, to attain to the full experience of Thy truth, and the joy of that life wherein Thou callest me to live with Thyself in the true and changeless glory of the Father.

MEDITATION XXXIX.

The Children of the Kingdom.

Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?—St. John xviii. 37, 38.

1. They who are of the Truth.

'Every one that is of the truth heareth My Voice,' saith Christ. Truth is not a speculation, but a power. Scientific truth is an object of inquiry. We have to reach out after it. It is not a matter of inward conviction. It has to be read upon the page of nature. There is, however, a certain capacity of happy conjecture which enables some minds wonderfully to discover the laws of natural truth. The man who has a genius for science guesses at external truths, and having guessed, proceeds to test his discovery.

However, he is not himself an offspring of that truth which he conjectures, although there seems to be a certain affinity between himself and the world he contemplates. We must ask, Whence comes this affinity? Surely it is because he has a certain relationship to the Eternal Mind whereby the visible universe was created. He was created in the Image of God.

When we come to moral truth, this affinity to

God finds a yet more definite assertion. Physical truths are but the basis of the material creation, laws stamped upon it by God as regulative powers distinct from the material substance in which they seem to be inherent.

Moral truth, on the other hand, is a derived power inherent in our human nature. Our moral nature is not moved externally or by a regulative necessity. It exists by the very possession of that moral law, and without that law inherent within itself it would cease to be. That law does not force it into action as a law of vegetable or animal life forces the material object to carry out some physical process. But that moral law is a principle which the interior sense can recognize for its own guidance as a duty, so that if it follows it by choice, the result will be a happy one, whereas the neglect of the law necessarily ends in misery.

Scientific truth is only guessed by some few minds which have a marvellous instinct by God's gift within certain departments of nature. Moral truth, as it is necessary for all, so is it also inherent in all as a vital principle. It may be obscured by faulty education, or it may be left undeveloped by want of culture, but the moral sense of mankind is one and the same in all.

This moral sense is the expression of a closer unity with God. It helps man to the performance of his duties in the world.

There is, however, in man the capacity of a still higher, a spiritual sense, by which he recognizes the truth of a higher world. Moral truth contains

many sanctions for itself which our present existence supplies. The highest sanctions for it, however, are derived from this higher sense, which acknowledges the truth of a higher world, and makes man conscious of his responsibility as an eternal being, associated with the eternal life and love of God.

This spiritual sense constitutes part of man's nature, as being created in God's Image, for the enjoyment of a higher life than that which the present external world can satisfy.

Those who are to enjoy God hereafter must now be living true to Him. Such truth of spiritual life is more than moral obedience. Moral obedience will be rewarded or punished hereafter. Spiritual life will be developed hereafter, but it is a power already active. Its future rewards are not an external coronation, but a real development of its own being, which needs to be thus brought into activity in this world in order to be capable of exercising itself with true delight in that which is to come.

Jesus said to Pilate that every one that is of the truth heareth His Voice. All men, therefore, are not of the truth. Just as some are wanting in the genius of physical science, so are some wanting in this spiritual sense. In both cases the cause is the same. It is not that God has withholden a gift which belonged to nature, but that the natural capacity has not received the culture which is required, and consequently has, as it were, died out. At any rate, it has gone out of action for the time.

Those who are of the truth and those who are

not of the truth are thus equivalent to those who, in the primary enunciation of Genesis, are described as the seed of the woman, the true representatives of human nature, and the seed of the serpent, in whom the poison of the diabolical nature has destroyed, whether permanently or temporally, certain qualifications which are necessary to the exercise of Divine life in man. As our Lord here speaks of one class, so elsewhere He speaks of the other when He upbraids the Jews with not being the true 'seed of Abraham,' though physically descended from him, but 'the seed of the devil,' their true father, because the poison of his falsehood has eaten out the faculties necessary for their attaining the inheritance of Abraham's promise. So are there some who are of the truth, *i.e.* of God, and others who are of the falsehood, *i.e.* of the devil. This distinction, however much it derives light and emphasis from the Christian revelation, seems to be inherent in our moral sense. Although the expression may be different, yet under all religions we have to recognize the class of men who are lost to all sense of right and wrong, all conception of the claims of God, and who live only for this present world.

Our Lord here claims that all who are of the truth will hear His Voice. In the Jew the truth might be destroyed by worldliness in religion. O, then, what as to Pilate himself? This utterance is his last warning. If he is of the truth, he will recognize the Voice of Jesus. If he turns aside from Jesus, he turns aside from the truth. Pilate knew it well. He did not know what would be the con-

sequences if he thus threw away a moral and spiritual capacity, still flickering within his breast, but, when once extinguished, never to be rekindled.

O Jesu, in mercy didst Thou warn Pilate. Help me to keep this warning ever present to my soul, that I may cherish the life of the truth. O keep the ear of my soul sensitive. Keep the action of my heart ever true to what I hear. 'Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth.'

My son, how often have I spoken and thou hast not cared to hear! If I had not spoken to thee, thou wouldst have perished altogether long ago. If thou hadst corresponded with My words whenever I spoke unto thee, how wouldst thou have grown in spiritual life and fellowship with God! Consider how thine estrangement from God is thine own fault, and see that when I speak, thou art quick to do.

Lord, I must confess that Thy mercy is wonderful in that Thou still speakest to me. How often have I listened to the devil when he breathed forth his lie into my soul, and I have given myself up to him to be his child, not Thine!

My son, remember that he is ever speaking to thee to deceive thee, but I am speaking to thee words which never man spake, words of power by the Holy Ghost. Listen, therefore, and do what thou hearest. Be not disobedient to the voice which still speaketh to thee from heaven in thy heart, because thou art still one

of God's children, and I am sent to call thee to the life of God.

Speak, Lord. Speak with power. Speak and act within me, that I may act true to Thee, accomplishing by the power of Thy grace what Thou makest manifest as Thine eternal life-giving truth. O sweet voice of Divine love, speak ever in my heart that I may hear and do.

2. Hearing the Voice of Jesus.

The Voice of Jesus appeals to the soul which is not spiritually dead. Obedience to the Voice of Jesus is the condition of spiritual renewal. The soul which hears, however feebly, becomes spiritually strong if it act with promptness to fulfil His Will.

We may surely take this moment as the crisis in Pilate's history. He said, 'What is Truth?' and went out. He left Jesus. He died. Had he but acknowledged the Voice of Jesus, it would have been to his darkened soul as when God said of old, 'Let there be light.'

Our spiritual nature, whereby we are allied to the supernatural world as the children of the kingdom, offspring of the truth, the seed of the woman, is not a mere impersonal moral consciousness. It is a personal relation to the Word of God. Being formed in God's own Image, we have a capacity for hearing that Voice. The capacity, however, does not satisfy our spiritual need. We need the Voice of the Speaker. In obedience to that Voice, our moral nature rises up to spiritual energy and the exercise of Divine life.

Our Lord, therefore, teaches us that we cannot rise up to the truth of our moral nature save by the obedient acceptance of His mediation, but must hear His Voice. The true spiritual morality necessary to man is a personal relationship to God, in whose Image man is created. The test of man's spiritual life is found in his being sensible of the Voice of Jesus as a sovereign power which he must obey.

The kingdom of Christ, therefore, is not a mere congregation gathered together by external agency. It is an upspringing organism which indicates a latent vitality in human nature called into energy by the Voice of Jesus, the true Son of man, although incapable of self-development without that Divine Voice. The Divine life is not a gift altogether new to man, as it would be in brute animals if it were given to them, for they have no inherent and antecedent relation to it. Regeneration is the resurrection of the soul to a life which was its own original inheritance, but from which it has fallen. We read elsewhere, 'As many as were ordained [or 'disposed'] unto eternal life believed.' This susceptibility of faith is what makes us the true children of Abraham.

O wonderful voice of the Creator and Redeemer, which, as it fills the soul, endues the soul with the true capacities of the Divine sonship! Prophets and kings desired to hear, and heard not. Blessed was that desire! They desired because they not only felt their need, but also knew the promise of the Prophet-King who should speak to them with the

life-giving power of God. They heard not in this world, but they could not rise to higher life until Jesus went down to them in their dark prison to proclaim the Gospel to them that were dead, that they might live after God in the spirit. Now that Voice has come to us in this our present world, and it is come for judgment. Pilate sat upon the judgment-seat, but it was really not to judge that he sat there, but to be judged. This interview, this final warning of Jesus, was to decide whether Pilate were of the truth or no—whether he had the spiritual capacity of hearing the Voice of Jesus, so as to rise to supernatural life or no. He heard but with the outward ear. He went out. He was spiritually dead.

O Jesu, draw my heart unto Thyself with the attentive obedience of holy love. O give me the love of the truth, that I may be saved. O let me hear, not with the outward ear alone, but with the inward ear of faith, responding to the power of Thy call. I can do nothing unless Thou speak. I can do all things if Thou strengthenest me.

O My son, again and again have I spoken unto thee and found no response. Yet still I speak. Yea, thy desire is itself an answer to My call. Be watchful not to close thine ear against Me. My Voice cannot go unheeded without irrevocable loss. Rise up in faith. Take up thy bed and walk. I am come to call thee into My kingdom. If thou wilt live, take up thy cross and follow Me. Go not out like

Pilate to the Jews; for if thou goest out, thou will die.

O Jesu, it is sweet to hear Thy Voice. Thy Voice is indeed the revelation of heaven upon earth. O sweet to hear! O sweeter to obey! They who act in its power feel its sweetness penetrating their whole being with the thrill of Divine life. But I, dear Lord, am so half-hearted, so double-minded! But half a heart for Thee! My mind so quickly turning to the world! Sweet is the Voice, but stern is Thy command! Alas, I shrink!

Fear not. 'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.' My Voice shall strengthen thee, if thou will but be brave, and trust in My word to do all that I shall tell thee. I am come to bear witness unto the truth; and if thou will accept the law of My kingdom, thou shalt find how full of power and grace that truth shall be. Think not of what thou art in the weakness of nature, but of what I am in the fulness of grace. Follow Me to Calvary, and thou shalt have the witness in thyself. Yea, thou shalt bear witness to Me, and in the final witness of death thou shalt find the perfect welcome of life.

O Jesu, how wonderful it is that Thou shouldst call such a one as I am! Yet am I sure that if Thou callest Thou wilt reject no one who obeys Thy call. My Lord Jesu, I give myself to Thee. Thou art my King of old. The help that is done upon earth, Thou doest it Thyself.

3. Faith working by Love.

'If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.' So spake our Lord of old. Jesus is our King, whom we must obey in all things. The Voice of Jesus comes to us in the ordinary affairs of our daily duty. It came to Pilate in the exercise of his judicial functions. The Voice of Jesus requires us to break with the world around us. His kingdom is not of this world, and has nothing to fear from this world. If we would hear the Voice of Jesus and accept the kingdom of the truth, we must be prepared to see earthly expectations and worldly judgments overthrown with the world to which they belong. If we would know the kingdom which Christ is come to establish, we must follow Him to Calvary, there to behold Him as the King of the Jews. Only by dying on the Cross can we accept the Crucified as our King. So it is that we must really show that we are of the truth, and hear His Voice calling us to a kingdom which is not of this world, a kingdom which we cannot know in its truth until the phenomenal glory of this world of falsehood has passed away.

Consider whether thou art looking, like the Jews, for Christ to set up a kingdom in this world; or whether thou art prepared to follow Him to Calvary, so as to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom to which they looked forward, and in which we are called to follow.

O glorious kingdom of Christ, where the saints who have borne witness to Jesus have Him for their

Witness, and rejoice in his manifest presence! What matters the suffering of time! It will soon have passed away. What matters the condition of the Church in the world, when through so many ages this unseen kingdom has been growing towards its completeness! Must we not rather fear when any outward prosperity helps to make this world a home for us? Christ has not prepared a home for His Church here below, but in the glory of the Father. To what am I looking? To this world, or to the age that is to come? To Pilate, or to Jesus? Where does the Voice of Jesus speak to me? From earth, or from heaven? Whither does He call me? To life, or to death?

O Jesu, let me cling to Thee in holy love. No place on earth can be so dear to me as the Cross whereon Thou art proclaimed as my King. The accidents of time can make no difference to me, if I may but abide with Thee in the fellowship of Thine eternal love. Thou art the Master who hast come and called for me. This world is but a grave where all earthly hopes must be buried, ere I can truly behold Thy glory. Of old Thou didst show Thy glory in calling back the dead to a few days of earthly life. But much more didst Thou show Thy glory in conquering death by dying Thine own self; and now Thou callest me to behold Thy glory by following Thee in Thy kingdom to die, as Thou didst die upon the Cross, to all that is of earth. So be Thy glory mine!

Yea, My son, follow Me. So shalt thou know My truth.

Lord Jesu, I leave all to Thee. Lead me whithersoever Thou wilt; but go Thou before me, and let me always walk in Thy footsteps. 'O Lord, in Thee have I trusted; let me never be confounded.'

MEDITATION XL.

The Self-convicted Judge.

And Pilate said unto the chief priests and the multitudes, I find no fault in this man. —St. Luke xxiii. 4.

And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find no crime in him.—St. John xviii. 38.

1. 'What is Truth?'

Pilate could not grasp our Lord's meaning when He spoke of truth. Power was appreciable to him, but truth involved a different element of life. Truth in the dealings of man with man he could understand, but truth as something abstract, something higher than man, something self-existent—truth, a kingdom—was altogether beyond his conception. He was bewildered. Scarcely in scorn, but in ignorant wonder, he asks, 'What is truth?' He had probably from the present interview gained too high a sense of what Jesus was, to mean to be contemptuous. He felt that our Lord was speaking of some great reality, but that reality was not for him.

But can a reality be set aside because it transcends our daily aims? No. If the reality of heaven has shone upon my heart, I may not turn to any earthly line of conduct, as if that satisfied; I must pause to ask, What does the truth require of me? Truth is

a kingdom, and I must submit to it. It was plain what truth required of Pilate, and the plain requirement of truth is in my own case the important thing. Pilate might say, What this Man means is right enough for philosophy, but I must turn to the business of life.—Yes; turn to the business of life, but truth will follow thee there!—So must I also feel the power of truth ruling my daily conduct.

This, then, shows us how the question which he puts is to be answered. The answer will be various for different persons in the various accidents of earthly life, but the answer is one and the same for all according to the substance of Divine life. Truth is the relation in which the soul must live towards God, or else the soul must die.

How apt we are to seek for some speculative answer to the question, omitting the practical! If we would only take the practical, we should find that it would lead us onward to whatever in the speculative may be of value to us. Pilate seems to say, 'Truth is nothing to me. It belongs to another world. Truth is the eternal. My kingdom belongs to time.'

Am I not apt in like manner to think of the duties of life as if their importance were only for the present moment? Do I let them go as if their relation to eternal truth were an hypothesis, and nothing more?

What is truth? Enough for me to know that it must be the law of my life. God is Truth, and I can have no relation to Him except by the law of truth. It has its origin from Him, and I can have

no power except by the operation of truth. It has its end in Him, and I can have no success except by the eternity of truth.

The fixity of the laws of nature is the manifestation of the truth of God. His law is the truth. There can be no deviation from it in any realm, whether physical or moral. The material universe acts invariably according to the laws by which God sustains it. In the moral world, man by free will may violate, but not set aside, His law; the law returns again to vindicate itself by punishing the transgressor. Miracles imply no interference with the changeless truth of God's law, for they are wrought with reference to the fixed requirements of a higher world. They elevate the actions of the lower world into the fellowship of higher powers; they do not set aside the ordinary action of fixed laws as if those laws were arbitrary. They belong to the development of the world; but that development is according to the truth of fixed laws, not a casual phenomenon.

Pilate asks, 'What is truth?' He does not wait for an answer. He does not want one. He does not believe that it is of any importance to him. He does not think that he could use it. He does not understand that he has to submit to it. The kingdom of the truth is not merely one of the kingdoms of the world. It is the universal kingdom. The kingdom of truth is the kingdom of God. Earthly kingdoms are phenomenal, transitory, untrue. The Roman emperor whom Pilate represents has no real power. The kingdom of truth is essential, eternal. The

King who stands to bear witness before Pilate's judgment-seat has power which no one can take away from Him. He is the Eternal, the Incarnate God.

O Jesu, help me to recognize at all times the changeless truth of Thy Divine Sovereignty.

Remember that though things round about thee pass away, thou, My son, livest for evermore before Me, and thine actions must be judged by My eternal law; judged not according to the transitory nature of the thing done, but according to the eternal nature of which thou partakest—thou who hast done the thing, whether it be good or bad; My own eternal nature, which by thine action thou hast outraged or glorified.

O Lord, Thine eternal judgment should, indeed, ever be present to my heart. Thou art the Truth, and canst not change. Thou dost not deal with us according to the changeableness of will which belongs to us Thy creatures. We must yield ourselves to the unchangeableness of the law of truth which belongs to Thee, our Creator.

Fear not, My son, the judgment of men, which will be set aside. Behold Me as the Representative of truth, bearing the false judgment of an earthly power. I have submitted Myself to Him that judgeth righteously, the Eternal Father, whose kingdom I proclaim as the Eternal Son. Thou must seek in all things to be judged

only by Him if thou wouldst be true to this sonship.

Lord, I look to Thee, to be judged here of men, even as Thou wast judged, and to be judged hereafter of Thee when Thou shalt judge all men with the manifest power of Thine Eternal Word.

2. The Innocence of Jesus.

Pilate wondered at the Truth. He went forth to the chief priests and to the multitudes, saying that he found no fault in Jesus. It was plain, therefore, what truth required of Pilate. If he found no fault in Jesus, there was no occasion for further trial. He must release Him or set the truth aside.

Observe how he addresses not only the chief priests but the multitude. He hopes by such a proclamation to win the multitude to his side. He knew that the chief priests had instituted this trial out of ill-will. He hoped that he might lead the multitude to dissociate themselves from this evil conspiracy. But his hope was vain. 'Cursed is he that trusteth in man, and maketh not the Lord of hosts his Strength.' If he had acted upon the strength of his own convictions for the fulfilment of his duty, all would have been well. He thought to escape from the difficulties of his own proper position, and to effect by popular artifice what he ought to have done by courageous rectitude. He perished.

He proclaims the innocence of Jesus. He proclaims his own guilt in that he will not stand by Jesus. He has an innocent Man before him, and

he is afraid to deliver Him from the frenzy of the people.

the innocence of Jesus which he proclaims. Pilate does not know the Divinity of Jesus whom it is his duty to protect. Am not I often more guilty than Pilate, in that I do know that Jesus is my God and yet I do not act for Him?

As Pilate did not acquit Jesus, he had to become one of His prosecutors. His office as judge was at an end when he had pronounced His innocence. From this time onward he has to act merely along with the multitude to accomplish His death.

O Jesu, Thou art without spot or stain of sin. Alas, how great a sinner am I! Thou hast come into the world to deliver me from my sins, and I give way to the world to aggravate Thy suffering.

My son, let My love sustain thee. I will show Myself to thee at all times, if thou will look for Me. Consider how thine actions move My heart, and thy heart shall learn to beat true to Mine in love of the truth. I am the Truth, for I am the very Image of the Father. I am incarnate for the accomplishment of the Father's will. Yield thyself up to My control, and I will sanctify thee by the communication of the Spirit of truth.

O Jesu, as Thy righteousness will be my glory in the world to come, so let it be my aim in all things to maintain Thy truth while I am in this world. Never let me look to the world or accept its judgment against Thee. Never let me fear to be condemned by the world if I have Thee for my support.

My son, follow not the maxims of the world, and look not to the world as giving thee security or rest in the way of evil. The world cannot help thee to walk in innocence; but if thou will come to Me, I will raise thee out of thy guilt, and make My holy glory rest upon thee.

O Jesu, all generations have pronounced Thee faultless. Thine enemies could find in Thee no fault at all, and all Thy saints in successive ages have testified to Thy truth and blessing. Grant me so to live in Thy truth, that I may find its delight,—so to glorify Thy Name that Thy righteousness may spring up within me.

3. The Confession of Christ.

Pilate was called to confess Christ, by pronouncing Him innocent and setting Him free. The Jews had a law of which it was not Pilate's duty to take any notice. He had to pass sentence upon that charge for which Jesus was brought up before him by the Jews, not for any charge which they might have as a private grievance against Him.

How careful must we be not to complicate the difficulties of any position by the consideration of collateral relationships!

Pilate wanted to ease the difficulty all round, and so to please the Jews; but it was no concern of his to help in prosecuting the charge of blasphemy under pretext of the danger of treason. As he was satisfied that the charge of rebellion was fictitious, he was not justified in allowing it to be brought

forward as a subordinate danger following upon the spiritual claim. He had but to be firm in confessing Christ to the extent of his own examination.

Am I careful to confess Christ independently of all ulterior results? How safely may I leave them with God! How safely may I leave it with God to vindicate His Son! How safely may I leave myself with God to sustain me, if I am true to Him!

Pilate condemned himself by acquitting Christ without ordering His liberation. How do I condemn myself when I acknowledge the truth of Christ and do not act faithfully in allegiance to it!

O Jesu, when I appear before Thy judgment-seat, I must confess that I have condemned myself many and many times because I have not lived true to Thee. I have professed Thy truth, and I have shrunk from its consequences. I have striven to accommodate myself to the world, and have turned aside from Thee.

My son, be faithful for the time that remains. Think not what may happen in the world, but bring all thine actions to the light of My judgment-seat. If thou hast to suffer because thou will not join the world against Me, remember that the world passeth away, but My blessing shall rest on thee eternally. Rest in that blessing amidst the perplexities of the world, and thou shalt rejoice therein in the day when My glory shall be manifested.

O Jesu, wonderfully hast Thou borne with me in the time that is past. Strengthen me with Thy grace

in the time that yet remains. Thou wilt be my Judge hereafter. Do Thou so illuminate me by Thine indwelling presence, that by Thy Holy Spirit I may have a right judgment in all things, and act as Thou guidest me in all things. I cannot glorify Thee save by submitting to Thee. Let it be my glory to confess Thee truly, steadfastly, fearlessly. Yea, let it be my joy to tell of Thy salvation and of Thy righteousness all the day long.

MEDITATION XLI.

The Galilaean.

But they were the more urgent, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judæa, and beginning from Galilee even unto this place. But when Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man were a Galilæan. And when he knew that he was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him unto Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem in these days.

Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was of a long time desirous to see him, because he had heard concerning him; and he hoped to see some miracle done by him. And he questioned him in many words: but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and the scribes stood, vehemently accusing him. And Herod with his soldiers set him at nought, and mocked him, and arraying him in gorgeous apparel sent him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day: for before they were at enmity between themselves.—St. Luke xxiii. 5-12.

1. The Heir of Prophecy.

When the Jews declared that our Lord was stirring up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place, they did not perceive that they were identifying Him with Messiah in accordance with his own claim. 'In the former time He brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time hath He made it glorious by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles' (Is. ix. 1, R.V.). Galilee was to be the primary sphere of teaching of that Child, the Son, who should come to us. The Word of the Lord was to go forth from Jerusalem, but Galilee should first experience the joy of that Saviour whom Jerusalem would reject.

The Jews looked for Christ to be born at Bethlehem, but they did not recognize Galilee as

the place where to look for prophets. It was a place of ignorance and degradation. Here as elsewhere they looked to one particular view of Christ, and were blinded to another which was at variance with their national pride. So they said tauntingly to Nicodemus, 'Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.'

This was just an instance of blindness coming upon them as a judgment. They were so satisfied with what they did see, that they did not look out for more, and therefore failed of profiting by one of the grandest utterances of their greatest prophet.

Am I careful to regard the Word of God in its completeness, so that the promises which He gives may not be forfeited by my failing to consider them in all their bearings? The prophecy of Bethlehem must not obscure the prophecy of Galilee.

The prophecies of the Branch were to call forth the name by which Jesus should be known as the Nazarene, and Pilate was not slow to bring this title into prominence when he wrote the inscription for the Cross, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' He knew how it involved contempt. He knew how it specially roused the hatred of the Jews. He did not know how he was setting forth the declarations of prophecy. Even Nathanael had wondered if any good thing could come out of Nazareth: but 'this is He of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write.' Nathanael had not refused to acknowledge Him in His truth. 'Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel.' He was to be called a Nazarene, and thus He was to be the Light, the Joy, of Galilee.

Galilee was a district especially notorious for its

turbulent disaffection against the government, but Pilate evidently did not attach any weight to the charge against Jesus that He was stirring up the people, forbidding them to pay tribute to Cæsar. He knew that this accusation was a mere utterance of worthless malice. It did, however, give him an opportunity of putting off from his own shoulders a troublesome responsibility. He therefore determined to send Jesus to Herod.

The superstitious character of Herod makes him a fit representative of the religious instincts of fallen humanity. Jesus 'belonged to Herod's jurisdiction.' True religion has to be recognized as alien to those false systems which the human heart has adapted to itself. The true religion of the Eternal is not at first sight distinguishable from those other systems which comparative religion deals with. Only they are dead corpses, mangled and corrupting, however much they may retain of the original beauty of the living form. The religion of Christ may be found in the feebleness of a child; but it has the life which insures growth, and will develop itself in energies of healthy vigour.

Men ask for the Church to work marvels, as she has been found to work on various occasions. They do so, not because they wish to see God glorified, but because they think that supernatural religion ought to meet any tests they like to require. They have not eyes to see that the moral marvel of the existence of the Christian Church is greater than any physical miracle which their outward sense could witness. It is the weakness of the Church,

and not her exemption from natural conditions, which really makes the glory of God within the Church to be most truly manifest.

Miracles might be wrought by emissaries of Satan. The existence of the Church as a living witness to moral truth amidst all the changeful opposition of successive ages and various countries, her existence as a source of beneficial agencies which meet the needs of the world time after time when they seem to be altogether beyond the power of her machinery,—this existence is the true witness to her supernatural life, a witness which no other form of religion can claim.

Let us remember that, amidst all the decay of Christianity in later ages, this witness gathers greater strength for us in these later days, with the records of history behind, than it had in early days when God wrought outward miracles by the hands of Apostles, for they went forth to the world without any such credentials of history to guarantee their mission.

O Lord Jesu, Thou didst condescend to bear all scorn for me. Help me to bear all scorn for Thee.

My son, the names of earth affect not those who would really live as the sons of My Father which is in heaven.

Help me, Lord, to put aside all worldly considerations, and to live simply for Thy holy Name.

Remember that I have foretold the reproach and the ignominy which await all who would

have that honour which cometh from God only, and think not that thou art to be an exception.

Indeed, I am foolish to think that Thou canst be dishonoured save by my sin. O help me to feel it to be my greatest honour if I can bear shame for Thy Name.

My son, the praise of the world tarnishes that glory of Mine which all faithful souls should exhibit. Desire it not. It will deceive thee if it will not destroy thee. On the contrary, if for My love thou dost accept the evil names of the world, then thou wilt find the sweetness of My love filling thy soul more and more.

Even so, Lord! If I hear Thee calling me by my name, that name whereby Thou knowest me to be Thine own, that is for me an abundant satisfaction. The world knows not Thy Name; but Thou makest it known to us, writing it upon our hearts, while Thou callest us to live therein; and the reproach of Thy Name from the world which knows Thee not, is the very echo of that sanctifying love whereby Thou callest us to live in its power. Blessed is the reproach of the Nazarene. Yea, I will say in thankfulness as the Apostate spake in blasphemy, 'Galilæan, Thou hast conquered.' Even so shalt Thou rise to be victorious amidst all reproaches, most glorious Jesu.

2. Jesus and Herod.

Herod was glad to see Jesus. He exhibits to us the value which superstition sets upon Christ. He recognized in Him a supernatural character, and

expected to see some miracle wrought by Him. But He set no value on Jesus as the Heir of prophecy, bringing to us the promises of a future life, and a real covenant of fellowship with God amidst our sufferings here below.

So does superstition look for marvels, not so much caring for them even as tests of truth, but seeking the gratification of a misdirected craving after that which is unseen.

He had 'desired to see Jesus for a long time,' not because he wished to be taught by Him or in any way to accept His control, but because Jesus was one of the wonders of the day. Now Jesus comes before him; but Jesus is silent. Jesus will not speak for the purpose of gratifying curiosity. The chief priests and scribes stand by accusing Him. Jesus is still silent.

The moral miracle of that all-enduring silence had no power for the heart of the superstitious Tetrarch. Contemplate Jesus treated as a fool because He was abiding true to the wisdom of God. Herod and his men of war set Him at nought. They treat Him as they might treat a lunatic who claimed to be a king. They put on Him the robe of candidature, as if He were seeking some office, and He is sent back to Pilate.

So does superstition scorn the true supernatural claims of Christ, desiring to degrade the Christian Church to an organization of thaumaturgy, valuing the fellowship of God for the sake of the supernatural display, not valuing the miracles simply as subsidiary to higher moral aims, and rejoicing equally

in the Divine truth whether there be any manifestation of supernatural wonders or no.

The moral claims which Jesus put forth were such that He cares not to substantiate them in such a presence by any word or deed. Herod sends Him back to Pilate with a jest, that the world-power may deal with Him as it pleases. There is nothing which brings supernatural truth into fellowship with supernatural falsehood.

Such is the contempt which all false religions must have for Christianity. Various forms of Christianity may arise, boasting of their supernatural gifts, but subordinating them to the immediate advantages of the worshipper instead of the glory of God. God will not suffer His Church to put such idle claims to silence by any exercise of wonder-working antagonism. The heart which will not accept Jesus without such signs will find Jesus silent. Jesus does not work miracles now, nor did He of old, in order to elicit faith, but in order to reward the love of the faithful.

O Jesu, let me feel the wonder of Thy love working in my heart, and I will not ask to see the wonders of Thy power for the gratification of any natural desire. My desire is so to die to all for which nature craves, that I may live to that which grace bestows.

My son, I desire to see the wonder of My power operating in thine own transformation, that all the host of heaven may see what I have done in thee and for thee. So would I

open thine eyes to behold My glory on the heavenly height, that thou mayest praise Me with all My saints in the blessedness of the eternal manifestation.

Lord Jesu, bring me to Thy heavenly kingdom. Thou dost condescend to the world's mocking because the world cannot know the glories of Thy kingdom; but evermore will I praise Thee for opening mine eyes to behold those glories, that I may follow Thee as my King. Though my nature is blind, yet am I truly blessed if I hear Thy Voice. Speak to me amidst the blindness of nature, that I may attain in the end to behold Thee with the loving gaze of faith.

Thou must be content, then, to see Me set aside by the worldly heart, for I neither seek its power nor do I gratify its carnal desires. Think not that My kingdom is enfeebled because thou seest Me treated with scorn.

O Lord, how shining is that robe which Thou wearest in the heavenly Jerusalem, wherewith the faithful clothe Thee in the day of Thine espousals! Thou art the Child of our race, and the Only Begotten of the Father. Glorious is that robe whose train fills the Temple with the living glory of Thy saints, united unto Thyself and glorified by Thine adoption. Worthless is any robe of earthly splendour which the power of this evil world may cast around thee. This world is but the sphere of Thine humiliation. The powers of the world set Thee at nought more by their praises than by their scorn, for Thou art above their knowledge. Help me to know Thee by learning to be set at nought for the joy of Thy love.

3. Herod and Pilate.

Opposition to Jesus brought them to be reconciled with one another. Superstition and worldly power are naturally at variance, but they make common cause against the truth of Christ. Both of them are forms of falsehood—one natural, the other supernatural; and they have a common enmity against the religion of Christ, in the simplicity of its revealed truth, as embodying the supernatural truth which the one caricatures, and the natural truth which the other emulates.

We must always regard it as a token of falsehood rather than of truth when any religion obtains the concurrence of the world. The world is opposed to all religion as such, but it will be ready to back up the false against the true, because it has an instinct that what is false is in some way akin to itself, and that true religion, as coming from God, comes with a Divine power which in any form of weakness is fatal to itself, since the power of the world cannot cope with it. If the world can cripple the Church it will, but it will ally itself with any semblance of religion in order to disparage the Church.

O Lord Jesu, never let me value the praise of the world as an evidence of truth. Keep my soul ever awake to the falsehood of the world.

My son, never be surprised when the world takes up with any form of falsehood, whether it be greater or less. 'When the world speaketh

a lie, it speaketh of its own, for it is a liar; and so is the father of the world, the devil.'

Jesu, Thou art the Truth, and Thy kingdom is the kingdom of the truth. Keep me evermore in the truth of Thy kingdom, that I may live with the life of Thy children.

NOTE.

St. John viii. 44 is a difficult verse. Upon the whole, the best interpretation seems to be that which is alluded to in the foregoing colloquy: 'When [any one] speaketh falsehood he speaks of his own, [speaks out of the natural fulness of his evil unbelieving heart. He shows himself to be of the seed of the serpent. By this fallen nature] he is a liar like his father.'

The lie (τὸ ψεῦδος) is the expression in the New Testament for the phenomenal, deceitful world as opposed to the truth, which is the real manifestation of the eternal and unchangeable.

Shallow, superficial religions suit the natural heart and are popular. The world must hate the truth because the truth condemns it.

MEDITATION XLII.

Jesus and Barabbas.

Now at the feast the governor was wont to release unto the multitude one prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. When therefore they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him up.—St. Matt. xxvii. 15–18.

Now at the feast he used to release unto them one prisoner, whom they asked of him. And there was one called Barabbas, *lying* bound with them that had made insurrection, men who in the insurrection had committed murder. And the multitude went up and began to ask him *to do* as he was wont to do unto them. And Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? For he perceived that for envy the chief priests had delivered him up.—St. Mark xv. 6–10.

And Pilate called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said unto them, Ye brought unto me this man, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I, having examined him before you, found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: no, nor yet Herod: for he sent him back unto us; and behold, nothing worthy of death hath been done by him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him. But they cried out all together, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: one who for a certain insurrection made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison. And Pilate spake unto them again, desiring to release Jesus; but they shouted, saying, Crucify, crucify him. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath this man done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him and release him. But they were instant with loud voices, asking that he might be crucified. And their voices prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that what they asked for should be done. And he released him that for insurrection and murder had been cast into prison, whom they asked for; but Jesus he delivered up to their will.—St. Luke xxiii. 14–25.

But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? They cried out therefore again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.—St. John xviii. 39, 40.

1. The Conspirators.

Annas and Caiaphas represent a worldly religious formalism, void of supernatural consciousness, but still dominating a traditional orthodox party. The Sanhedrist council, having lost its spiritual vitality,

has become the prey of these more stirring unbelievers. In Pilate there is governmental authority; in Herod, superstition. Barabbas stands out as impersonating individual self-will, the licentiousness of rebellion against lawful power. He had raised a sedition in the city. Contrast him with Jesus, whose mission is to proclaim true freedom, by the assertion of the all-regulating power of Divine love. Contrast the ineffective turbulence of self-seeking malice with the calm triumph of truth. Contrast the reception of each by the worldly heart. Jesus is accused of sedition, and handed over to be crucified, although Pilate upon inquiry finds Him guiltless. Barabbas is demanded for liberation as the favourite of the people, although he is known to be at the head of a lawless band of men who had committed murder in the insurrection.

His name signifies 'the father's son.' Possibly it may mean the son of a Rabbi. So is he by his very name placed in opposition to the only begotten Son of the Eternal Father. But he is his father's son as bearing his father's likeness. His works show whose son he is. Our Lord said to the Jews, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth' (John viii. 44). Barabbas, the people's choice, is truly the representative of those who, formed in the image of God, are nevertheless living with the inspiration of the devil, selfishness, falsehood, strife.

Barabbas is truly the antichrist. The anarchical spirit is a terror to the powers of the world, and

Barabbas is cast into prison. He had committed murder in the insurrection. Individual interests must be sacrificed to the ambition of self-will, as it gets ahead. There may be promise of benefit to the multitude, but it is at the cost of life to the individual who stands in the way. Jesus lays down His life that He may give life to us. Barabbas and his fellow-conspirators commit murder that they may push their plans to a temporary success. Jesus for our sakes became poor. Barabbas was a robber. Possibly his robbery may have had the pretence of benefiting his party or the nation. Probably he was acting under the pretence of asserting Jewish freedom from Roman tyranny. But he was not doing this to the glory of God. He was enriching himself thereby.

He is, indeed, the representative of the human race in its rebellious self-will, the son of fallen man, perverted, collectively and individually, by Satanic intoxication, as Jesus Christ is the Representative of the human race in its true obedience to God and the glory of its ideal perfection, whereby every individual energy is gathered up into the collective harmony of the God-Man.

Barabbas was a notable prisoner. He represents fallen man in his bondage. Alas, how are the human race justly in bondage by reason of their manifold transgressions! The bondage of Divine justice holds them in punishment. The bondage of Satan's tyranny holds them in sin. The bondage of social necessity holds them in check. O what a prison-house of sin is this evil world! O how

glorious is that freedom wherewith Christ alone can make us free!

O Jesu, Thou art the only begotten Son. Thou callest me to the liberty of the sons of God by the power of Thy Holy Spirit of truth and love. Let me ever cling to Thee. Thou wast bound that I might be set free.

My son, Satan had stolen thee from God. He had slain thee. He had stolen from thee thy life, that thou mightest in thy deadness be enslaved to himself, the lord of death. I have ransomed thee for the glory of the Father. I have given thee new life as the heir of salvation.

O that I might always walk in the power of this new life! Blessed Jesu, how is it that Satan can thus claim dominion over me?

Listen not to his deceits, My son, but come to Me, that thou mayest live in the exercise of the life which I have given thee. Satan calls thee to the sonship of worldly pride, which only ends in destruction. I call thee to live as one of the sons of God, even as I live Myself, and with that life whereby I live who am God's true and only Son.

Lord, I desire to walk in obedience along with Thee. Better is the bondage of God's service than the bondage of my own free-will.

Yes, My son, in that Divine bondage thou shalt find true freedom. All things will serve

thee if thou servest God. Satan chains down his slaves in dreamy slumber, and even the things which they seem to have they cannot enjoy. So is man's boastful free-will but a deceitful freedom. So does Satan mock mankind, and draw them the more closely into his grasp.

O Jesu, set me free from the bondage of deceit. Truly to know the Father as Thou revealest Him is to gain eternal life. My very nature is conscious of a sonship which the things of this world cannot gratify. Raise me to Thy truth, Thy life, Thy glorious love. Thou art the Son of God. Hold Thou me up by the power of Thy grace, that with Thee I may die to this rebellious world, and in Thee may recognize the joy of the Divine inheritance whereunto Thou callest me.

2. The Choice of the People.

The people cried out for Barabbas. He had their sympathy even amidst their censure. Pilate might feel that there was no danger to the government in acceding to their wishes.

The world rejoices in schemes which belong to the world, even though their hopelessness may be apparent. The worldly heart would fain get rid of Christ, and of all the authority belonging to a Divine Fatherhood. The effort of false freedom wins their admiration, though it end in failure, but the promise of true freedom appeals not to their heart. The schemes of self-will are a homage to the multitudinous indi-

viduality of man in the shattered condition of his fallen being. The glory to which faith points him onward makes him feel the bondage, the littleness, the misery, out of which he requires to be rescued. The world pities the failure of its partisans, but is ready to accept the enterprise of every new adventurer. Whether it be in politics or science, in morals or Church organization, the world will love its own. Barabbas is to be pardoned, though men may know his rebellion to be fruitless. The presence of Jesus makes the world tremble, even though His silence be eloquent with supernatural manifestations of love.

Consider what are the ways in which thou art ready to choose the Barabbas of thine own will rather than the life-giving obedience of Jesus. Be not confident because there may be others ready to applaud thy choice.

What is this uprising passion which I would fain gratify, even at the expense of the life of Jesus? Did Jesus die that I might glorify God by this holy pleasure, or am I seeking an unholy indulgence which requires that Jesus be put to death? Surely I must bring every pleasure into the immediate presence of Jesus, that I may learn whether it be worthy of Him or chosen in rivalry to Him. O how miserable are the pleasures of the world which I so often seek instead of seeking to live with Jesus! O that I could more constantly remember the contrast! O let me always ask myself—This or Him? Which will I choose? My unruly passion or Jesus? How blind, how stony-hearted, were the people who could cry, 'Not this Man, but Barabbas!' Let me

look up with faith and cry, 'Not myself, but the God-Man Jesus!' How miserable was the judge who could condemn Jesus and deliver unto them Barabbas! Let me take care that I am not surrendering Jesus to the will of the many, the approbation of the prevailing maxims or fashions of thought! Let me not be as Pilate, powerful on behalf of the world, but impotent to resist the world's demands when Jesus claims consideration. Blind were the Jews who chose Barabbas in his guilt, rather than Jesus in His innocence; but how much more blind am I, if I choose not Jesus in His atoning love, Jesus in His glorifying power, rather than my evil lusts and passions, so treacherous to deceive me, so foul to degrade me, so strong to slay me!

O Jesu, Thou art He whom the Father hath chosen. Even so let me choose Thee. The world may bind Thee, but suffer me not to follow the desires of the worldly heart. If Barabbas be loosed, still let me be bound along with Thee, that I may not share his evil freedom! If Thou art bound, let me consider that Thou wast bound in order that I might be free, and that my only freedom is in being bound along with Thee!

My son, beware of choosing what the world may choose. In choosing Me, thou art choosing that which the Father hath chosen; yea! thou art choosing Himself, for I cannot be separated from Him, nor He from Me.

O Jesu, help me to choose Thee perfectly by the power of Thy Holy Spirit. Unless Thy Spirit illu-

minate me to choose Thee in Thy truth, my evil passions must lead my choice astray. Alas! there is no form of rivalry in which any evil can present itself to me as opposed to Thee which does not appeal to my sinful nature with a miserable fascination. O let Thy Holy Spirit set free my will, that the allurements of this lower world may not carry me away from Thee.

My son, when the world entices Thee, look thou to Me. Choose nothing until thou knowest whether it is to be enjoyed in Me or instead of Me. The light of My Personal Presence will help thee to see what is to be chosen, and what thou must avoid. Whatever thou choosest, take care that thou measure it by My glory.

O Lord Jesu, Thy glory, though it be hidden from the world, is ever dear to my soul. Whatever I may choose without Thee turns to my destruction. Thou art my Life, and the Life of all whereby I can live. Thou art the Resurrection and the Life. My outward nature turns to outward things by reason of its deadness. Thou, and Thou alone, canst raise me up. Raise up my fallen nature from the darkness of death, that I may choose Thee. Quicken me in the light of Thine own eternal righteousness, that I may live in Thy truth.

3. Barabbas set Free.

At the Paschal Feast Pilate must deliver to them one prisoner. It is the great Paschal Lamb in whose honour the deliverance is made. Yet how little was

it known that Jesus was the true Redeemer when Pilate let Barabbas go. He it is who redeems us from the worse bondage of sin. One prisoner is set free; for all mankind are one.

Contemplate, then, in the liberated Barabbas the image of thyself, set free by the Paschal Lamb. Jesus is given to death, and thou art restored to life. It is not the voice of mankind which can claim thy liberation from the righteous Judge. It is the Voice of Jesus Himself which avails with the Divine Justice on thy behalf. He claims thy freedom as He pays thy price. See that thou render Him the grateful homage which is due.

Think of thy guilt which demanded thy condemnation. How wilt thou appear at the last great day, now that thou art set free? If the life of Jesus has been thy ransom, the Spirit of Jesus must be thy law. Thou art set free, not by the voice of the people to serve the people, but by the Voice of Jesus to serve Jesus.

Barabbas is set free from prison, but the bondage of his own sinful nature remains. Jesus by His death sets thee free from Satan, and by His Spirit calls thee to freedom from thyself. It was but an outward freedom which Barabbas gained. The freedom which Jesus gives thee is both outward and inward. Jesus died that thou mightest be set free. Thou art set free that thou mayest die along with Him.

Little avails that freedom which must needs end in death. Blessed is that freedom which bids thee look forward to die with Jesus as the truest aim of

life, so that when outward death shall come, it may not be a penalty to be dreaded, but a consummation of joy to be attained. Jesus triumphs over death by dying, because He is free from sin. Jesus sets thee free from sin, that thou in dying mayest share His triumph.

Contemplate the multitude cheering as Barabbas is liberated. Contemplate the multitude of the heavenly host rejoicing on thy behalf. As thou hearest the voice of praise, remember that they are praising Jesus thy Liberator. Thou must confess thy guilt which merited the bondage, that thou mayest praise His merits who obtained thy pardon.

Against whom hast thou rebelled? Is it not against God? Yet it is He who welcomes thee as His own true son. Thou art the son of the Father, created in His Image. Another father has claimed thee, but the fatherhood of sin enslaves the children of the wicked one. Look up, then, now as being restored to the Fatherhood of God by the renewal of the Holy Ghost. This freedom ennobles; yea, it deifies. The Image of God which thou bearest by creation rises to Divine life by the free Spirit of grace.

O blessed Jesu, wonderful is that love whereby Thou hast set me free. Fill me with the same love, that I may give Thee worthy thanks. Thou hast given Thyself to bear my penalty that I might be freed. Strengthen me with Thy righteousness that I fall not from Thy freedom.

My son, behold Me being led out to be crucified, and remember the joy wherewith I con-

template the glory of My redeemed. For thy liberation I have suffered. Take heed that thou rob Me not of that joy by turning back to the bondage of sin.

O Jesu, whenever sin begins to absorb me, open mine eyes to see Thee led out to be crucified. Shall I be content to let Thee be crucified to secure my freedom, while I give freedom to those hateful lusts which work my destruction as they rise up against the Father? What shall I refuse to suffer, when I know that Thou hast refused nothing? By the power of God Thou hast set me free, and Thou hast set me free for the glory of God. O let the glory of the Holy Ghost work effectually within me, that I may set forth the glory of Thy redemption while I live to the glory of the Father.

My son, remember that thou hast to make the choice continually—thyself or Me! Thyself in thy sin, thy weakness, thy death; or Me in My righteousness, My strength, My life! To-day is set before thee life and death: therefore choose life.

Yes, dearest Lord, I give myself to Thee who gavest Thyself for me. By the Spirit of Thy redeeming love, help me constantly to choose Thee, not myself. Whatever I have to suffer here below, let me walk in that freedom whereinto Thy redemption has brought me. Let nothing be hard to me whereby I may but use Thy gift of freedom. So let me attain by Thy Cross and Passion to the glorious freedom of the heavenly city, where the bondage of sin shall threaten me no more.

MEDITATION XLIII.

The Cry of the Multitude.

Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. But the governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? And they said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What then shall I do unto Jesus which is called Christ? They all say, Let him be crucified. And he said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, saying, Let him be crucified. —St. Matt. xxvii. 20-23.

But the chief priests stirred up the multitude, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate again answered and said unto them, What then shall I do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify him. And Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, Crucify him.—St. Mark xv. 11-14.

1. Jesus and Pilate.

Pilate asks, 'What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' It is a question which the powers of the world are continually asking, but it baffles them. He represents a power of a different order from that which belongs to their jurisdiction. He has done nothing by any earthly power which can bring Him under the charge of guilt as rebellious against constituted authority. Yet it is manifest that He is the Centre of a Power which pervades all the dominion over which Pilate rules, and operates irrespectively of the imperial will. He is the Heir of a spiritual kingdom, a Divine inheritance. Of Him the prophets spake. He is called Christ. That title opens up a vision of another world, before which all earthly visions fade. There is no collision testing their relative strength; but that which seems

to be solid vanishes away, and shows its emptiness in the presence of that which seems to be impalpable and powerless. No display of military strength can drive away a pestilence which fills the air, and so no earthly power can deal with the life-giving mystery which breathes from the Person of Christ. Pilate asks in dismay, 'What am I to do with Him?'

This Presence is a power which must work the death of all who resist Him; but it will also work the glory of those who obey Him, giving them a higher life. There is only one thing to be done. Truth must be recognized as a sovereign power. It is the Presence of God. It must be worshipped.

As it is a Power superior to earth, so it must be accepted in spite of all earthly rivalry and opposition. It does not tolerate any combination with earthly power. We must feel the nothingness of all earthly power just in proportion as we feel the reality of the Divine power of Christ. Truth does not come to add strength to falsehood, but to take its place. Christ does not come to found a kingdom in this world, but to make the world vanish before Him. The powers of the world must not look to Christ as a decorative principle by which their natural glory is to be heightened. All must bow down before Him, and acknowledge that they live for Him alone.

Pilate must be prepared to forfeit what he has, if he is to deal truly with Christ and accept Him as what He is. Alas! he is not prepared to act thus.

He has said to Jesus, 'Knowest thou not that I have power to release Thee, and have power to crucify

Thee?' He heeded not the answer which Jesus gave. He now turns to the multitude. 'What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' He who boasts of his own power is prepared to abdicate it in submission to the popular clamour. He knows what the demand of justice is when an innocent man stands before his tribunal. He knows that the popular cry is the cry of injustice, dictated by envy. Yet would he hear their bidding ere he made his unholy resolution.

There is but one alternative before him,—to honour Jesus as God and set Him free, or to give Him up to the multitude to be crucified. It is but a small matter to pronounce a poor man innocent, when he knows him to be so. But it involves a bold resistance to the Jewish multitude, and though he affects to despise them, he fears to irritate them.

O Lord Jesu, how small are the ways in which Thou callest me to acknowledge Thee, and yet how fearful am I when I have to act for Thee in opposition to the outcry of the world!

My son, consider that in these small acts thou showest thy love to Me or thy contempt for Me. So wilt thou be strengthened to resist the world. I ask not great things of thee, but small. Act thou for Me in small matters, and I will act for thee in great matters—yea, in eternal glory.

Jesu, enlighten my heart to perceive Thy presence, that I may always look for Thy power.

Do that which is right, My son, whether thou see Me or no, and I will make My power manifest so that thou shalt see Me afterwards.

Alas, O Lord, how prone am I to look to the world and its judgments, so as to be forgetful of Thee!

Look not to the world, My son. Close thine eyes to the world, and thine ears to every worldly judgment, if thou see Me and hear My Voice. Ask not of the world how thou must act towards Me; for though the world profess to honour Me, its counsels are counsels of hatred. Fear not to oppose the world, even though thou be all alone. I will stand by My servant, and the malice of the world shall be incapable of doing harm to thee.

O Lord Jesu, truly I know that to serve Thee must be my joy on earth, whatever the world may do; and so only can I attain to see Thee as the Joy of heaven when the world is past away.

2. 'Crucify Him!'

The multitude cried out that Jesus should be crucified. In vain it was that Pilate proclaimed His innocence. Again and again they said, 'Crucify Him!' Reason they had none to give. They could not bring forward any accusation. They had received their impulse from the chief priests, but they had nothing wherewith they could themselves reproach the Christ.

O what a mockery of justice was it, when the judge, instead of investigating any crime that was

brought up against the Prisoner, had only to turn to the multitude to ask what he should do to Him, and what charge of evil could be brought against Him! The consciousness of ignorance only served to aggravate the clamour of hatred. They knew no reason, and therefore their malice was unrestrained. He did not satisfy their own desires and expectations of the coming Messiah, and therefore they were eager that He should be put to death. They longed for a Messiah who should break off the Roman yoke, and now they were willing to have that Roman tyranny riveted upon them rather than accept Christ, although He has shown forth in the midst of them such wondrous works of supernatural beneficence.

The madness of the people! Truly it was an outcry of madness which could thus demand the death of One whose whole life had been known only for its acts of love.

We must not be surprised at the same madness breaking out against Christ in His Church as then assailed His own Person. There will be many an outcry, varying from age to age, but the heart of the multitude remains the same in its antagonism to Christ, and therefore we may expect the same wild, bitter, unreasoning outcry to be raised against His truth.

The world expects from Christ gifts belonging to this world, and resents the frustration of its hopes, and yet very great are even the temporal benefits which the Christian religion has conferred upon mankind. The world hates the promises of a better world which Christ does bring, because the glory

of that world outshines the things upon which its heart is set, and they are exhibited in a worthlessness which the world does not care to recognize. The world of one generation can see the madness of the outcry raised by previous generations, but it is unaware that it is repeating the same frenzied rebellion against God.

O Lord Jesu, though the world utters its cry against Thee, strengthen me by Thy grace that I may always be loyal and steadfast in Thy love.

Remember, My son, that this is the test of thy love to Me, even that thou continuest in My love when all the world is turned aside in hatred and scorn. I loved thee amidst all the outcry of the world, and thou must love Me in like manner. I bore that outcry because I loved thee, and desired to win thee to My love.

O Jesu, whatever be the form in which the world assails Thy truth, help me to hear that word still echoing on which the multitudes uttered, saying, 'Crucify!' Let me feel that it is the same world now, and the same hatred, and that Thou art the same Saviour whom the world still hates. Surely I cannot fear to be crucified if I know that I am only sharing in Thy death, whose death is my true life!

My son, thou must bear the hatred of the world if thou wouldst truly be My disciple. As the world hated Me, so will it hate thee, if thou art true to Me.

Yea, Lord, so must it be! Yea! why should

I desire to have it otherwise? Must it not be my chief glory to be conformed to Thee, whatever be the cost? O pardon the unholiness of my own heart, which can ever seek to find gratification in the love or praise of that world which cried out for Thee to be crucified.

My son, I know thy weakness, and I know thy good will. When thou feelest thyself to be weak, then look to Me for strength. I was unmoved amidst the outcry of the multitude, and I will be thy Strength. Think not that thou canst stand aloof, taking thy part neither with the world nor with Me. With one or the other thou must join thyself. Hide thyself in My embrace, and thou shalt find that the utterance of the world's hatred is changed into all the sweetness of the Divine welcome, wherewith the Father accepts all those who are partakers of My Passion.

Even so, dear Lord! Alas, I am not worthy to suffer anything for Thee; but it was because Thou lovedst me that they cried out, 'Crucify!' and I would indeed praise Thee for every suffering whereby I may learn more and more the fulness of Thy love.

3. The Multitude prevailing.

We must not be surprised that the cry of the multitude prevails. As it was of old, so will it be over and over again. The world's sense of justice will maintain a cause that is merely of the world, but when there is a Divine element in that which is assailed, the world's sense of justice dies away.

As Pilate was ready to do the people's bidding rather than suffer a tumult, so will the powers of the world always be ready to sacrifice Divine truth for human expediency. They cannot measure Divine truth. Therefore they will not take it into their calculations.

Strange weakness! When the world is called to stand up for God, it fears the people; but it would fear to betray the meanest of the people to the many if the judgment were in any mere matter of the world. If Jesus be there, they call upon God to defend the cause, and the ideas of human justice are set at nought. Truly God will defend the cause of His Son. They who assail Him shall find the Divine Justice asserting itself, though not immediately. All times are in God's Hands, and the judgment will surely come upon every act of oppression. The multitude who win the victory by an outcry setting justice aside, shall receive their sentence from the inexorable Judge whom they have defied. The earthly judge may yield to their clamour, but the judge who surrenders justice must feel the power of that which he so unfaithfully administers. The momentary tumult may be avoided, but the eternal wail must follow.

It is not only those who exercise functions of public authority who find Pilate as their representative. In the private actions of daily life, we have to stand up for Jesus against the hubbub of the world's dissatisfaction. The cause of Jesus may assume varied forms; but in whatever way we surrender His requirements to obtain some momentary

quiet, we may be assured that vengeance will follow. Yet we see it not at the moment; and they who parley with the multitude to discover what they have to do, are soon made to lose their sense of responsibility.

It may seem a small matter to contend for the life of One whose very weakness makes that life a burden to Him—a weakness so great that it seems a marvel how the life is still sustained. Nevertheless, the injustice of the surrender is in no way diminished by the feebleness of flickering vitality in the form which claims the protection of the judge. We must never think that we may abandon the truth of God because in some particular it seems hopeless by any faithful effort to maintain it. Such moments of weakness are the occasions on which God calls us to show our real regard for His truth. It is truth which we have to value, and not merely the consequences of any particular act of truthfulness. To despair of Divine truth is a sin against the Holy Spirit of truth. If we will but stand by the truth of God in times when it seems ready to perish, God in His truth will stand by us, so as to give us the victory; but a momentary failure in our fidelity exposes us to an eternity of antagonism against the Divine justice. We know how much was involved in Pilate's unjust sentence. He did not know. He knew the justice which he was outraging. That knowledge ought to have sufficed. Let us not wait until we know all the details of any act to which the world urges us onward. We can only be safe while we abide true to the requirements of eternal

justice, whatever may be the dangers of fidelity or the hopes which we may seem to establish by prevarication.

O Lord Jesu, in all the events of life let me always behold Thee and acknowledge the glory of Thy truth. Never let me yield to the outcry of the world what belongs to Thy glorious truth. To die for Thy truth is to live eternally; but to surrender Thy truth, hoping to live by such surrender, is indeed to destroy the very power whereby alone I can have life.

Yea, My son, I am the Truth and the Life. With Me thou shalt live, though all the world be arrayed against thee; and without Me thou canst not live, though all the world be on thy side.

Surely, good Lord, if I only could see Thee, I never would let Thee go; but without knowing how near Thou art, I fall into many a sin to which the world entices me. O that I could always behold Thee! Then would I serve Thee.

My son, serve Me, and thou shalt behold Me. Act with the knowledge of My presence, though thou see Me not, and thou shalt find My presence lighting up the path of duty, so that all shall be plain to thee.

O Lord, in all things I desire to acknowledge Thee; so wilt Thou truly direct my paths. Help me always to remember that the world is full of deceit, so that I may not follow the multitude to do evil. Strengthen me that I may stand out even alone against the evil

world. Let me hear Thy Voice, that I may be deaf to all the voices of the multitude. Let me never surrender Thee to them, but listen for Thee in full assurance that Thy call shall make me safe from every assault which they may raise up against me.

MEDITATION XLIV.

The Scourging.

And Pilate, wishing to content the multitude, released unto them Barabbas, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.—St. Mark xv. 15.

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.—St. John xix. 1.

1. Jesus in the Barrack-yard.

The Roman soldiers are standing round about. They have heard the events of the morning. To them, probably, Jesus seemed to be an idle enthusiast, crazed and obstinate. That gentle Form might well have roused their compassion. They would not share in Jewish prejudices. They would be more likely to be enraged at Jesus if they thought Him to be the impersonation of Jewish rebellion, than if He were regarded as the object of Jewish scorn and hatred. Possibly, knowing His claim to be a King, they might feel the greater indignation, supposing that a feeble impostor was endeavouring to stir up the people to a mad attempt at freedom. Should such as He attempt to set aside the power of the Roman legions! At times one in high station, the victim of democratic fury, has won the pity of a mad multitude, as being involved in circumstances that were not self-chosen. Now they probably felt that Jesus was Himself attempting to gather a party for rebellion,

and trading upon the life of a fakir to gratify a hopeless ambition by a struggle which, however hopeless, might bring many of their confederates to death.

No pity touched their hearts. All the hatred which they felt towards the Jewish nation gathered itself up in one concentrated storm of violence against the helpless object in whom defiance of the imperial power found impersonation. Hereditary disgust, indignant contempt, personal revenge, hardened their hearts so that they could not behold the tender traits of Divine love which shone round the Sufferer. Hear their rough words of satire, brutality, and profaneness. See their wild gestures of mockery and malice. Behold Jesus standing in the midst with all the calmness of a heavenly Presence. There is not a word of reproach breathed from His lips, nor any token of anger ruffling His demeanour. If devils had taken possession of the soldiery, surely angels were worshipping the mysterious Prisoner.

Four men come up and strip Him of His clothes. O what a spectacle of misery is bared to view! His emaciated figure is covered with the clots of Blood which had come from Him during the Bloody Sweat. His bones stand out as marked with lines of Blood. They chain Him to a pillar and prepare to exert all their strength in scourging Him. Surely madness itself must have been hushed for a moment as the first thud of the scourge resounds through the court-yard, tearing His skin and making fresh Blood to flow. Indeed, well might that sound ring through the whole world, for the sins of the whole world are

avenged thereby. Those soldiers are the blind instruments of Satan's rage. Already does he see man's race snatched from his grasp as the scourge cuts into the sacred Flesh of the Redeemer of mankind. 'By His stripes we are healed.'

Blind were those soldiers, who so vilely maltreated this sacred Body. How blind was Satan's rage, who knew that this was the Son of God, and that the very wounds which he so madly drove the soldiers to inflict were working out the redemption by which his own head must be crushed!

O my soul, as thou gazest on this spectacle, what dost thou see?

Dost thou see thine own sins as spikes of the scourge which pierce His Flesh with every stroke? Dost thou see thine own earthliness in the blindness of heart with which the soldiers assail Him? Dost thou see how Satan is goading them on with diabolical malice, and recognize herein the malice whereby he goaded thyself to the acts of sin which needed so great a penalty? Dost thou see beneath that blood-stained Form the holy Heart of Jesus full of love to God and to thyself, bearing the penalty of thy sins for the glory of God, and looking to thy salvation as His reward by reason of the great love which He bears to thyself? Dost thou hear the blows which fell upon that Frame reverberating in thine own heart as the solemn chords of penitential anguish which ought to waken thine own voice to recite the confession of thy sins with corresponding reality? Dost thou behold how Jesus suffers for thyself and learn the blessedness of suffering for Him? Contemplate

this Divine mystery with confession, penitence, and gratitude. From His submission learn self-sacrifice; from His silence, patience; from His suffering, to take vengeance on thyself. Contemplate the love wherewith the Father accepts Him, and look for the same love to rest upon thyself, that suffering with Him thou mayest be accepted in Him.

O Jesu, how great is Thy love who bearest this for me! Alas, how great are my sins which needed so great an expiation!

My son, I suffer for that which thou hast done. Yea! I suffer for it as if it were My own doing. I take thee to Myself, that I may suffer for thee. See that thou take Me to thyself, that thou mayest be glorified in Me.

O Lord, how must I mourn for my sins for which Thou hast thus suffered!

Contemplate My sufferings. So only canst thou learn to mourn aright. My sufferings are the measure of thy sins. Let them be also the measure of thy penitence. Consider that each one of thy sins deserved that which I suffer in every blow that falls upon Me, and in the number of the wounds which these stripes inflict, behold the number of thy sins, for which My love needs to provide a compensation. The sins of the past thou canst not undo; but see how I have suffered for them, and let each drop of My Blood which atones for them be a principle of vital power in thine heart, springing up with

energies of gratitude, and filling thee with impulses of Divine love. So shall thy sins be transformed into manifestations of My holiness. And let the vision of the past preserve thee from the sins of the future. When thou art tempted to sin, think with thyself whether thou wilt add to My sufferings. Willingly do I bear the stripes of the soldiers' scourge, but when I have to bear them because of the negligence of My redeemed people, then, indeed, each wound stings Me to the heart, as I think how little value My people have attached to the Redemption so dearly purchased.

O my Lord, let Thy wounds be ever present to my heart! O let me never forget the greatness of Thy love! O let me shrink in utter abhorrence from every sin which can add to the bitterness of Thine adorable suffering.

2. The Silence of Jesus.

How must the soldiers have wondered at the silence with which Jesus endured such immensity of suffering! Executioners have marvelled even at the patience of martyrs, so different from the violence of criminals who had to undergo similar tortures. How must these Romans have been baffled by that evidence of patient power wherewith Jesus, the King of martyrs, stood unflinching beneath their utmost violence, abiding in the tranquillity and peace of God, while their lashes fell with redoubled intensity of hatred upon Him who was so unmovable! Hear

their jeering malice as they seek to rouse some token of impatience with bitter sarcasm and biting strokes. Yet is He silent. He opens not His mouth. They may weary their own malice, but not His submission.

Jesus meanwhile is contemplating the sins of all mankind for which these stripes are due. His soul is lifted up in supplication to the Father that He will have mercy upon sinners: yes, my soul, mercy upon thee! Contemplate the Heart of Jesus pleading for thee. His silence shows the love of the Father wherewith He suffers in perfect obedience. The utterance of His Heart as He speaks to the Father shows His love to thee. Let the Holy Spirit open thine ear, O my soul, to hear that prayer, and kindle all the affections of my heart that I may live true to Him.

Silent is Jesus while He bears those stripes whereby alone I can be healed. O, that silence must awaken my utterance in humble confession of those sins. Can I claim the atoning virtue of those stripes if I do not claim in humble penitence to be the very sinner for whose sake He suffers them? No! Those stripes will avail me nothing except I own them as the consequence of my miserable sins, and cry out in penitence with self-abasement that in the merits of that silence my acknowledgment of guilt may ascend to heaven, and be transformed into the voice of triumph whereby on high He claims my pardon.

As I stand in this barrack-yard and see how He suffers, why do not the host of heaven drive me away as being guilty of the anguish of their Lord? Truly they would scorn me, truly they would drive

me to despair, did not the silence of Jesus plead for me on earth with its invincible patience, while His voice pleads for me in heaven with its meritorious all-sufficiency. They dare not intrude upon that patient sublimity of love, but they wait to see whether the silence will arouse the penitence, so that the heavenly answer may descend in the fulness of power. O let me see the heavens watching my dull heart, hushed to hear if any voice of penitence is elicited from my heart by such a spectacle. Surely they abhor me for my sin! Surely they worship the mediatorial love which claims to rescue me! Surely they wonder at Him so unmoved in His suffering! Surely they wonder more at me so unmoved by the gratitude which I ought to give!

O Jesu, Thou wert silent in the midst of Thine enemies, suffering for sinners. Let me not be silent in the blessedness of Thy grace, but open mine eyes to see, my heart to feel, my tongue to praise, Thy love.

My son, would that thou didst feel My love to thee, as truly as I have felt thy want of love to Me. Thou seest how I am scourged. My wounds thou seest, but My love thou seest not, which makes Me bear these wounds. Let not thy sense of My love be an empty, passing thought. O feel My love filling thy heart with joy, as I have felt these wounds covering My Body with anguish.

Joyous indeed it were to feel Thy love, O Lord, in all its truth. Teach me, I pray Thee, more and

more. While I learn Thy love to me, I learn how I ought to love Thee. Alas, how feebly! Yet surely by suffering I may learn to love Thee gradually. Each blow of the scourge shows me how Thou lovest me. O, even though it be by many a biting wound, let Thy love be developed within me. In silence and by suffering Thou teachest Thy people what no words could teach. Lord, I refuse not the discipline whereby Thy children may be taught; but I long to learn that which no words of earth can teach, so that I may attain to that participation of Thy joy which the songs of heaven shall utter.

3. The Wounds.

Contemplate the wounds by which the holy flesh of Jesus is torn. O what a thrill of agony spreads through His Body with each one of those wounds! The precious Blood flows in copious streams, and it surely seems as if there could be no life left in that feeble frame to sustain any further suffering. Yet does no suffering exhaust Him. The feeble frame is the frame of man, but the life within it is the life of God. It is God who is thus suffering. The exhaustless love of God is the strength which abides within Him. Though the skin be torn off in countless cuttings, and the flesh be gashed with many a sharp incision, and the blood stream forth from the raw Body, and the bones be laid bare, yet is the love wherewith He suffers still as unmoved as ever. His soul is abiding in the power of the Divine love. Far away from Himself, His mind is taking

account of the sins of the whole world. The wounds touch upon His outward nature, but the sins eat into His soul with agonizing horror. Think how His holy mind appropriates each blow to the purging away of some sin which thou hast done!

Gazing on each added wound, learn some fuller consciousness of thy own sin, some fresh sin which thou hast forgotten, or, it may be, never known. Yet here Jesus suffers in order that He may take it away. The sins which thou knewest not in thyself, thou shalt attain to know in the contemplation of thy Saviour. O, if He call thee to suffer, wilt thou refuse? As the pardoning Blood streams from the Body of the Saviour, so the guilt is purged from the soul of the sinner whose wounds of penitence correspond with His wounds of violence.

Wound follows upon wound, and the Roman soldiers know not what they are doing as they spend all their strength in the outrage which they execute. O my soul, it is thou who art really guilty of these wounds. Yet thou hast not known in thy sins how they must fall upon thy Saviour. Was the sin done in ignorance, yet must the suffering be endured in perfect consciousness. An ignorant Saviour, not feeling the full burden of thy sin, would be no Saviour at all. And surely also a penitence that is not illuminated by the fellowship of His suffering would be no penitence at all! Heedlessly have I often sinned, but the intense consciousness of a penitent soul must equal the heedlessness of the sinner. The wounds of the Saviour must wake me to the knowledge of that which I have done.

Jesus looks not to those Roman soldiers while they scourge Him, for He knows they act not of themselves, but as the instruments of a guilty power whose bidding nevertheless they are bound to fulfil. But He looks to thee, O my soul! For He desires to arouse thee to a sense of thy sins. O tender gaze of Love, almighty to redeem! Surely that silence must speak throughout all the chambers of my heart. If the ear of my soul receive not its plaintive power, how can I ever hear its jubilant welcome? Here, listening in attentive sympathy, I must gain strength so that I may have my portion in the glory which He would have me share. Here in sympathy I must by grace unsin what sins by self-indulgence I have committed.

O Jesu, the sins which I have committed have all of them fallen upon Thee. O let the righteousness which Thou hast wrought be in like manner effectual to work its full consequences upon me.

My son, for thee I have suffered, and be assured that if thou wilt take My sufferings to thyself in penitent love, My sufferings cannot be in vain. I who suffer for thee am the very Lord who shall judge thee. I cannot fail to recognize in the judgment the work which I have accomplished in My humiliation. I will not fail. Take heed that thou fail not to appropriate that which I have done.

O Jesu, indeed I would fain continue contemplating Thine agony until Thou come again in Thy glory! Here I find security, and if I turn away from this

sight, it seems as if I must lose all its blessing, perishing in the world of sin.

Yes, My son. Always must thou keep My Passion present to thy mind and heart, even as in My Passion I have had every moment of thy life present to My redeeming consciousness. If there were any moment of thy life which I have not redeemed by My suffering, then would there be a moment in which thou mightest safely forget Me. But no! it cannot be. Take heed, therefore, never to live without a constant remembrance of the wounds which I am bearing, for every moment of thy life. That moment of forgetfulness without My suffering would be too strong for thee, and drown thee in perdition. Amidst all the joyousness of the world, hear the blows which fall upon My Body suffering for thee. So shalt thou also hear the glorious praises of Heaven, whereby thou shalt be welcomed through the merits of My Passion!

O Lord, great is the grief which the contemplation of Thy Passion stirs within me. Yet would I not have it less, since only thus can I know Thy glory. O let this grief pervade my whole nature, so that in every faculty I may realize the blessedness of union with Thee. Sweeter far is it to share Thy Passion, and rest in the mysterious tranquillity which Thy Divine peace gives, than to have the transitory ease which the world may offer, and to feel that Thy Divine love can never be attained. O let every suffering wake up in my heart the sweet memory of Thy love.

MEDITATION XLV.

The Soldiers' Mockery.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the palace, and gathered unto him the whole band. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And they plaited a crown of thorns and put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they kneeled down before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spat upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head.—St. Matt. xxvii. 27–30.

And the soldiers led him away within the court, which is the Prætorium; and they call together the whole band. And they clothe him with purple, and platting a crown of thorns, they put it on him; and they began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote his head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him. And when they had mocked him, they took off from him the purple, and put on him his garments. —St. Mark xv. 16–20.

And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple garment; and they came unto him and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they struck him with their hands.—St. John xix. 2, 3.

1. The Crown of Thorns.

The soldiers plaited a crown of thorns for Jesus. He had, indeed, shown Himself triumphant in the struggle, enduring their hard blows, and remaining all unmoved. He has shown Himself a Conqueror. He is the Prince of Peace.

Not a wreath of laurel, but of thorns, is given Him. He has not won a victory for the world to honour, except by appearing as His slaves. So they shall appear in the great day of triumph.

Thorns were the testimony of creation to the shock which nature felt at man's sin. 'Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee' (Gen. iii. 18). They were the testimony of nature to man's fall. He for whose enjoyment the world had been renovated

was to find his life in the world a continuous toil, and his recompense a continuous suffering. Now the true Man has to bear the punishment of the fallen man. But that punishment has the character of a reward. The thorns are not to wound His Hands in His toil, but to crown His Head, that He may thus go forth to be proclaimed faultless even by His enemies.

This crown of thorns is the expression of malice and mockery, but it is the malice of Satan and the mockery of those who knew not the truth. His kingdom is the kingdom of the truth, and they who are of the truth must hear His Voice, but they who belong to this world of falsehood recognize not His silence. His words they could not hear; His silence they could not understand. They mocked Him as being guilty, for in His spotless glory He shone forth with the reflection of their guilt. All the hatred which they bore to God must wreak itself on Him whose love was uncontaminated by any of the maxims of that hatred.

They plaited the thorns and felt in their own fingers the sharp points which were to be pressed upon His tender flesh. The sins for which He suffered were their doing. They, as sinners, suffered even in the very sins which He, their Redeemer, had to bear. They see Him suffering, and they themselves shall have yet more to suffer for their own sins, because they thus contumeliously treat Him as a sinner whom they ought to worship in His holiness.

They put the crown of thorns upon His Head. 'The Head of Christ is God' (1 Cor. xi. 3). It is His Divine Person which has to bear the outrages

of their rebellion, as well as the sharpness of their penalty. As they press the thorns upon those tender brows, they know not that they are assailing the Majesty of the Almighty Creator.

The Blood flows from His temples. Yet He remains unexhausted. It flows in the inexhaustible fulness of Divine love. The streams which trickle down His cheeks do not make Him faint in the weakness of death, but are poured forth for the communication of life to all who will seek their power.

O my Jesu, God and Man, how dost Thou suffer, triumphing over Satan for my deliverance! O let me be bound as a slave to follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. The mockery of the world is my only glory; for my only glory is to confess that Thou art my Deliverer.

My son, if thou wouldst share My triumph, thou must bear to be crowned with thorns in this evil world.

Yea, Lord! The world has nothing but thorns for those who would love Thee. Here must we know the thorns of the world, if hereafter we would rejoice in the flowers of Paradise. Let me not draw back. O, while I see Thee meekly sitting that the crown may be pressed upon Thy Head, let me surrender myself to be conformed to Thee amidst all the violence of a sinful world.

Think not, My son, that thou canst have the thorns for a little while, and then receive the sweetnesses of the world as thy recompense.

Nay, dear Lord! Lifelong be the thorny troubles

lest I lose the victory to which Thy triumph calls me. Thy Blood flows with life from Thy suffering brow, and I would have the power of Thy Divine life amidst all the pains of earth unceasingly. Thy Passion will give power to all who live in its truth.

Yea, My son, if the thorns of the world make thy head to bleed, remember that I am thy Head. Think more of the inward power of My Headship than of the agony of thine outward nature, amidst the anxieties and reproaches of the world.

Lord, I desire to know Thee truly as being the Head in whom my life is to be found. The sharp thorns of the world shall make Thy life-blood stream forth from every wound I bear, so that as it gushes out it gives me the very consciousness of heaven. More bitter than these hard thorns are those thorns which wound me amidst the world's delights. Those, indeed, I feel not at the time, because the poison of sin makes my sensibility so dull, but they fester afterwards and spread the misery of corruption through my nature; whereas the thorns of Thy Passion fill me with the consciousness of renewal in health and grace and energy.

So it is, My son. And thou shalt find the thorns of My Passion turn to glory, and sweetness, and joy, and power in the life eternal, if thou art content to abide with Me whilst here. Only be steadfast in faith, looking for the crown of righteousness, which I will give thee in the great day if thou art faithful. I have worn for

thee the crown of death, and thou shalt wear with Me the crown of life.

O blessed Jesu, so be it! O, when I am ready to faint beneath the troubles of the world, one drop from Thy thorn-crowned Head shall touch the wounds of outward scorn and fill me with refreshment and joy.

2. The Purple Robe.

Already is the garment of His humanity dyed in red. It is not the blood of His enemies which now stains it. It is His own blood. The body of the ancient conqueror was painted red. Now it is from within that the triumphal redness covers Him. His Body is all one wound. Yet by these sores He triumphs. The soldiers cast upon His shoulders the scarlet or purple robe. In His triumph He must have His apparel glorious with the blood of His enemies, who in His endurance had the greater glory of His Blood which He shed for their victory. He must wear the robe of righteous vengeance, who bore in His humiliation the robe of all-pervading love. He must be known as a King to judge, who is known as a Redeemer to save.

Yet the soldiers did not know what they were doing when they mocked Jesus with this semblance of royalty. They thought, by empty symbolism of ridicule, to mock the false pretence of an impostor. They knew not that their action only symbolized the worthlessness of all the honour that the world could give to Him whose kingdom was the kingdom of eternal truth.

How worthless does the robe of Christ's victory appear in the eyes of the world! They treat it as a common soldier's cloak. They can only look forward to a transitory pageant. They seek not the glory which shall abide for ever and ever.

They look for the cloak to hide the wounds rather than for the wounds to glorify the cloak. They do not understand that the cloak of final victory can only be given when the wounds of a lifelong struggle have earned it.

The robe of glory is to them a matter of lifeless accident. They regard the vengeance of the day of triumph as the mere exercise of human feeling, which may be gratified or neglected at will. They do not know it as the inalienable manifestation of a Divine relationship wherewith the Almighty must appear in the midst of His enemies.

They think of God's power only as being akin to the power of the world, and therefore they think of the power of the world as if it were essential to the exercise of Divine power. They know not that all the greatest power which the world can give is only as the worthless cloak, which must be cast off before the real glory of the power of Christ can shine out.

They do not recognize the power and glory of His sacred Blood having within itself the lustre of the life of God, which is ever capable of making itself felt with the dazzling radiance of Divine love; and they think of the outer cloak of human power rather as hiding the weakness of Christ, than as a temporary veil wherewith He allows men for a time

to obscure in empty mockery the operation of His irresistible sovereignty.

They give to Him the symbols of dignity, as if He needed such dignity for His own supply, and it were in their power to confer a reality wherein He was wanting. They know not that even in apparent destitution He still possesses the glory of inherent truth, and that His power will be found effectual in a display of self-sufficing energy, which shall not seek support from men that it may live by that which it commands, but shall demand the homage of men that they may live by that which it communicates.

O blessed Jesu, how worthless is all that the world can give! The greatest glory of the world purchased by the blood of enemies is not to compare with the glory of Thy precious Blood, shed for Thine enemies in the infinite condescension of Thy love.

Truly, My son, they mock Me who measure My strength by the glory which the world gives to Me, or My love by the glory which in this world I give to them. The glory which I give is the glory of a sweet sympathy with My sufferings. It were no glory to wear the cloak of mockery which the soldiers bring. Yet such is all the glory of the world, which, alas! My people so foolishly desire.

Nay, Lord, the world's homage never can give any glory. Rather the red cloak has a glory from Thy Blood moistening it within! So the bright things of the world have no value for the faithful heart, save in

the consciousness of suffering along with Thee as truly if the world praise as if it blame.

My son, truly blessed is every wound of My Passion which thou mayest be permitted to share. Though the cloak of seeming favour with men may sometimes hide those wounds, yet must thou feel them as the constant memorial of a living fellowship with Myself. They who feel not in themselves My wounds, cannot know what it is to live with Me in a world which ever continues to hate Me. The cloak thou wearest may at times hide thy suffering from others, but it must make thee feel the sores more keenly within.

O Lord, help me indeed to accept the mockery of the world as the insignia of Thy kingdom, and if the world ever praise, let me feel its praise as being a mockery greater than its scorn. How can anything which the world can give be other than a mockery to me since Thou hast called me out of the world to live in Thy love?

Happy art thou, My son, if thou knowest this, so that thou canst ever live in the true consciousness of so great a truth.

O Lord, teach me in the way of Thy commandments. O let me seek no glory or satisfaction from a world of death, but only in bearing Thy shame and wearing the garments of Thy Passion in the blood-red freshness of Thy sacred wounds.

3. 'Hail, King of the Jews!'

Pilate had delivered Jesus to be scourged, although he knew Him to be innocent. The soldiers, having stripped Him that they might scourge Him, mocked Him by arraying Him in the purple robe, with the crown of thorns. The white robe which Herod had put upon Him, as if He were a candidate for the throne, probably suggested such treatment. His blood-red Form unvanquished by suffering showed Him indeed to be a Conqueror. What throne could be like that which He had won? Other thrones depend for power upon the homage of subjects. Jesus reigns with power inherent, irresistible. All the violence of the world avails nothing against Him. He claimed the kingdom of the truth, and He has shown that His claim is right.

It was a strange mixture of truth and falsehood which brought the soldiers to their knees before Him. Surely they knew that He deserved their homage. The instinct of their hearts made them recognize in Him the veiled majesty of God. Yet their heart hated truth. If they must bow before Him, they would bow before Him in mockery.

They acknowledge the throne which He claimed, as King of the Jews. It was a nation hated and despised. These soldiers only knew it in its worldly aspect. They knew not the holy hill of Sion which was its unfailing principle and foundation of life. They could only know it as a centre of long-seated superstition, which was regarded by all around them as being hostile to every other form of human life.

King of the Jews! They might have some notion of a superstitious dignity attaching to the King whose birth was expected. But in presence of this feeble Sufferer they would reject as idle every prophetic anticipation. The very Jews themselves had degraded the words of prophets to mere worldly promises of aggrandizement. They knew not that utter extinction of every hope of a Davidic restoration was the very prophetic guarantee that Messiah was upon the earth, in whose Person a spiritual dynasty should arise with world-wide power. The visible lawgiver had ceased because Shiloh was come.

They bid Him hail. As soldiers in a distant province might call their general to the throne of the Cæsars, so would they now in their mockery proclaim the aspirant who, in despite of Roman subjugation, would represent in His Person the magic claims of David's dynasty. They would look for largesses from a successful general. What were the gifts which Jesus, King of the Jews, had got to give?

Indeed they knew not! Yet were those gifts far greater than any earthly potentate could offer. The kingdom was eternal, and eternal were the gifts. How little could their hearts conceive of such a kingdom!

Do our own hearts really pay to Jesus the homage which our faith in His Divine kingdom requires? We cannot plead the ignorance of Roman soldiers. Do we offer to Jesus that bold allegiance which they would offer to one who would claim the imperial purple at their instigation? Am I prepared

to fight for my Lord and Saviour when I see Him in the purple robe of His own redeeming Blood? The empire is His. He asks not my support that He may attain it for Himself, but He bids me fight for Him that I may share it with Him.

I cannot plead the ignorance which blinded the guards of the Prætorium; but if I give not in truth and love that homage which they gave in mockery, I am making a mock of Him by my outward profession of the faith; and more than that, I am guilty of treason, for He is indeed my King, my Redeemer. By creation I belong to Him, and by redemption I must own a double title to the sovereignty over my own heart which none can share with Him.

O Jesu, while the world around bids Thee hail in its mockery, let my voice rise from the depth of my heart, in the power of Thy Holy Spirit, to own Thee as my King in the loving relationship of the heavenly life. Yea, though I be alone in my acknowledgment of Thee, grant me the boldness of Thy Holy Spirit that I draw not back from confessing Thee before men.

My son, thou must not shrink from confessing Me, whatever the world around thee may do. Fear not the world's scorn. Think not that thou canst win the world's applause while confessing Me. To confess Me in the way that the world esteems is to violate the very law of My confession. See Me as the Object of the world's mockery, and learn that thou must bear witness to My truth by suffering shame for My Name.

O Lord, how subtle are the assaults of the evil one! So often does it seem to me that in bearing witness to Thee I ought to receive the world's applause.

Nay, My son, that cannot be. Though thou hadst everything which the world could desire, all must be forfeited if thou wilt be true to My kingdom. What gift of the world was there which I did not possess? Nevertheless, dost thou not see the world mocking Me in this barrack-yard? So must thou endure all contempt for My Name's sake at the hands of the world, if thou wouldst have thy part with My saints in My kingdom.

O Lord Jesu, alone Thou bearest all this suffering and this shame, yet wilt Thou never leave any of Thy servants to be alone when called to witness for Thee. Thou didst stand by Thine Apostle Paul and helpedst him when no one else stood by him before Cæsar's tribunal.

Yes, My son. Even so will I alway stand by thee.

O dearest Lord, let me keep that promise in my mind continually, that upon all occasions I may look for Thy help. The smallest occasions on which I can bear shame for doing the smallest thing which Thy law requires, must surely rise to infinite dignity, if Thou at such times art near to help me; and the greatest animosities of the world must sink into insignificance, if I go forth to meet them in the power of Thy love. If I have Thee, I have all. Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

MEDITATION XLVI.

Jesus brought forth.

And Pilate went out again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in him. Jesus therefore came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And *Pilate* saith unto them, Behold, the man! When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify *him*. Pilate saith unto them, Take him yourselves, and crucify him: for I find no crime in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.—St. John xix. 4–8.

1. The Declaration of Innocence.

Whatever may have been the relation of Pilate to the mockery which the soldiers apparently began of their own mind, he found that it entirely coincided with his own idea of treating Jesus in such a way as to win the sympathy, or at any rate to obviate the bitter determination, of the people who were seeking His death. Pilate has questioned Him, and is assured of His innocence. The kingdom which He claimed was not of such a character as to endanger the supremacy of Rome. It had no worldly power at its back. It was an enthusiast's dream.

Pilate proclaims Him innocent. 'I find no fault in Him.' Innocent! Why, then, is He brought forth for further insult? Why the scourging which His wounded Body shows? Why does the minister of justice bring Him forth to the people as if they had still some right to say what shall be done to

Him? Why does he keep this Prisoner in bonds when he has let Barabbas go free? In truth, the Innocent is thus kept, in order that by His innocence the guilty may be pardoned. The Innocent is detained and Barabbas discharged; for this Innocent One bears upon Himself the sins of Barabbas—yea, the sins of all the multitude, yea, the sins of the whole world.

O my soul, Pilate brings Him forth to thee and proclaims to thee His innocence, that thou mayest accept Him as One capable of bearing the punishment which is thy due! 'He hath done no violence, neither is any deceit in His mouth' (Is. liii. 9). He has claimed the kingdom of truth that He might rescue thee from the spirit of falsehood, and renew thee to life who art by nature dead as the liar's offspring (John viii. 44). He has claimed to be the Son of God that He might make thee to live with the Divine Sonship (1 John v. 12). In love to thee He suffers Himself to bear these outrages, which by a moment's word He could dispel. The only Spotless One in a sinful world, He bears, and will bear to the end, all that a sinful world deserves to bear; for if He were to put aside from Himself thy penalty, He could not raise thee out of thy sin. Death alone can enable Him to fulfil the purpose for which He is come into the world. By death He will manifest His innocence, His sovereignty, His Divinity. He cannot transfer to thee His innocence while He is bearing, under the conditions of a sinner's life, the humiliation of a guilty inheritance. He must be manifested in the glory of the Divine life, hidden within Himself, ere He can call thee to the glory of

a new birth, so that thou mayest live with Him in the holiness of God. Here His innocence must be proclaimed, and man must show his guilt by the hatred of holiness which drives him to the shedding of innocent blood. Hereafter His innocence shall be made manifest in the fulness of power, and all must perish in their guilt who will not seek to gain pardon by the power of that Blood renewing them to innocence. Now Pilate brings Him forth to the people, and attests His innocence, while he calls upon them to determine His doom. Hereafter God shall set Him forth before the people as Lord and Christ, that He may pronounce judgment, as the Son of man, upon all that are gathered before Him—in vengeance upon those who obey not His gospel, while as a Prince and a Saviour He shall welcome all who have in this world come to Him for grace.

O Jesu, the spotless Lamb of God, in Thy suffering Form I see what my sins deserve. Truly Thou sufferest all for me. O let me never shrink from suffering, complaining that it is not my due! Rather let me be thankful if I am ever able to suffer anything which my own sin has not occasioned. All I can suffer equals not what my sins deserve. Thou sufferest, who deservest only glory for everything that Thou hast done. Be it, then, my glory if I may ever suffer something which comes to me not as penalty. All suffering is my due; but all that does not result from my own sin comes with the sanctifying power of Thy Divine purity. Here Thou sufferest in innocence. Hereafter Thou shalt have Thy reward. Here let me

count it joy to suffer, that I, a sinner, may hereafter have my reward along with Thee, and from Thee, and in Thee. Purge me from my sins by Thy grace amidst the discipline of earth, that I may show forth the holiness of Thy redeeming love in the glory of heaven.

O My son, Pilate finds in Me no fault at all. Yea, the Eternal Father has proclaimed Me as the beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased. No sin is in Me, but thy sins are upon Me. Thy nature which I have assumed is under the penalty of sin. Though I am innocent in My own Person, yet cannot I be in this sinful world without bearing the penalty of a nature enslaved to death and sin. Yea, My innocence is that which makes My suffering so great. Little is it that I suffer merely in the Body at the hands of man, although it is more than any other suffered. Great is the suffering of My Soul in its innocence, resisting all the assaults of the prince of darkness. Therefore behold Me crowned with Divine glory, as the accepted Offering for the sins of the whole world. None leave their taint within Me, though they derive from Me the gift of holiness. That holiness which knows no taint suffices for the cleansing of all who will come to Me. Come to Me, then, however great thou feelest thy sin to be. Come to Me with the full assurance that I will purify thee from all.

O my Jesu, Thine innocence is indeed beyond all

the power of created thought to apprehend. Thou purifiest all that come to Thee. O let Thy Blood purge my heart from its corruption, my mind from its ignorance. O raise Thou me up to such purity that I may indeed attain to the vision of God. Yea, purify Thou me from every trace of my own pollution, that being perfected in Thy holiness I may receive the welcome of the Father, so that in me also, even as in Thee, He shall find no sin, but I may stand faultless before Thy Throne for ever in the glory of Thy righteousness.

2. 'Behold the Man!'

This is the true Man. Why is He thus covered with wounds and surrounded with mockery? It is because He bears the hereditary curse of sin. That curse must remain upon man's nature while he is in this world under the tyranny of Satan. The mockery of men is but the expression of the mockery of the hosts of evil. Men mock Him in blindness. The powers of darkness know that He is the Holy One of God whom for a while they have under their power.

This is the true Man, of whom the patriarch Job was the great type. He is given up to Satan's power with only one limitation, that Satan must not touch His life. By a higher life He belongs to a higher world, over which the empire of Satan does not extend. Satan is to work upon Him all the evil that man's sin has merited, but he must not transgress the dominion which, as the prince of this

world, he can claim over all that are born here. Jesus is truly Man, and therefore must suffer all that belongs to man to suffer; but the tyrant must not assail that life which was His before He came into this world.

O was there ever sorrow like unto the sorrow which appears before us in the suffering Form of Jesus? Never was there, for never was there one who was so truly and perfectly man as to be able to suffer that which Jesus suffers. These sufferings would long ago have taken away the life of any mere man. The limit of Satan's power over Jesus is not a limitation of Satan's effort, but of his capacity. He rebels against God, and he would fain drive away the nature of God with the fulness of Divine life from the Sufferer whom we contemplate. But whatever Satan may attempt, he is foiled in this endeavour. The Divine life abides unmoved amidst all of his assaults. It is a power altogether beyond his reach, and it sustains the humanity, so all his worst outrages fail to injure it. Behold the Man who has to suffer the extreme of Satan's violence, and yet remains unconquered in the power of the fellowship of God. Behold the Man in whom the truth of God is manifested and the falsehood of Satan. Behold the Man whose heart and inner life are perfect in the fellowship of the Divine love, and whose outer nature is marred more than any man before by the malice of the accuser who claims Him, the Incarnate God, as if He were the feeble offspring of Adam. Behold the Man who is the Seed of the woman. He stands forth in meekness,

ready to bruise the head of the serpent; but the serpent must first bruise that heel, by which Satan knows his own head must be crushed.

Behold the true Man, bearing upon Himself the curse of sin, but remaining inwardly true to Him in whose Image that human nature was created, and in whose love it must find its joy. The violence of Satan shakes other men from their integrity, but it only shows that Jesus cannot be shaken. As thou beholdest Him, learn to abide unshaken in the Divine love. He bears the wrath of God which is poured out upon the human race, but He abides in the love of God wherein He ever lives indissolubly with the Father. The curse is external and transitory; the love is eternal and inherent. Behold, then, how the true man must ever live, not in the expectation of joyousness or triumph in this sinful world, but in the power of supernatural union by incorporation into the Body of Christ, and participation in the glorious hypostatic union whereby He, the Head, gives personal, interior support to all His members. Behold the Man whose likeness thou must bear, unshaken in the stability of faith, although suffering all that Satan can do to destroy that which he is able to touch. Behold the Man who bears thy sins that He may renew thee unto His holiness. Behold the Man whose life is hid with God because He is the only begotten Son of God. Behold the Man who is the Heir of man's curse and the Source of God's benediction. 'God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him' (2 Cor. v. 21).

O Jesu, in Thee do I behold my sin and God's power, the nature which bears my doom, and the Person who abides in God's love. O let me keep the sight of Thee ever present to my heart, that I may live in the truth of Thy heart, ever faithful to the love of God.

My son, thou must learn to appropriate My love by bearing My sorrows. Look unto Me and be thou saved. Look not on the outward appearance only, but contemplate the inward reality of truth. Look with the eye of faith, so that in the silence of My outer sufferings thou mayest hear the voice of Divine love, wherewith I am ever sustaining the outward nature in living fellowship with the Father as His Incarnate Word.

O wonderful mystery! by Thine own Will Thou sufferest, that Thou mayest be found as the true Man created in God's Image. O let Thy Holy Spirit sanctify my will, that I may act in Thine uncreated life. O why do I surrender myself to the falsehoods of earthly desire, instead of looking to the glory of the Eternal Truth! O let me be blind to every outward thought, that I may have mine eyes opened to behold Thy interior glory.

My son, look inward, and behold thy Divine birth received from Me; so wilt thou recognize the evil of the world. Behold the misery of the world's glory, and the glory of anguish in the world for God. Thou seest how willingly I

suffer. So must thou suffer willingly if thy sufferings are to be like Mine.

Dear Lord, how hard is it to feel in very truth that detachment from the world which a real consciousness of its falsehood ought to effect! Indeed, I never can detach myself from the world by contemplating its worthlessness. Show me Thy glory, for it is only in beholding Thee that I can gain the detachment which I desire. O let me behold Thy wounded Form, that from Thy wounds I may derive strength, and live in the life of Thy precious Blood, and feel the power of Thy Divine grace, and have my understanding illuminated so as to attain to the beatific vision of Thy truth.

3. The Cry of the Multitude.

The sight of human sorrow is apt to move man to compassion, but the sight of the suffering of Jesus only wakened the multitude to intenser hatred; for that which they beheld was the sorrow of God. For the love which He bore to them, they take His contrary part (Ps. cix. 2). They cry out, 'Crucify!'

O there is something altogether supernatural which sheds a Divine glory around that mangled Form. There is a Divine effluence of grace which breathes from every wound whereby man's sin is taken away. We must accept the wounds if we would experience the grace. We cannot say of Him that He did not deserve such suffering, unless we can also say that we did ourselves deserve it.

O my soul, if thou wouldst take the suffering from thy Saviour, thou must take it on thyself. Or

His or thine! It is that which man deserves. Man cannot escape from it save by accepting it. The doom is no arbitrary sentence. It is the manifestation of truth.

He who did no sin cannot escape from the curse but by bearing it. As thou beholdest what the doom of sin is, thou must accept it willingly, O my soul, as thy true sentence. Otherwise thou canst not rise to the true blessing of predestinating love from whence thou art fallen.

The sight of Jesus wakes the indignation of the natural heart, because the natural heart does not desire to die to the world around. It would fain have its heaven here below. It repudiates the fall, and claims to be punished or rewarded only for what it has done, disregarding the state of sinfulness in which it was born. Instead of willingly accepting the Divine judgment, it blasphemes God for the judgment whereby it is condemned. It claims to have the finite rewards of punishment, which its own acts might seem to justify for the children of men. It rejects the necessity of rising up to the supernatural righteousness of the Son of God. Moral innocence it would claim, though it has it not. Spiritual innocence it hates, for that is a power which not only excels it but condemns it, and this is the innocence which is shown forth in the suffering Man Christ Jesus.

Well might the heathen say that if virtue appeared upon the earth mankind would combine to crucify it! Yet he knew not altogether why his words were true. Man can admire every human

excellence which lifts man up in earthly power. Man shudders at that Divine excellence whereby man shows forth his true vocation as the son of God. He can look forward to all that shall make for him a heaven upon earth, but he will not acknowledge himself as the heir of higher destiny, to which he can attain only by rising superior to everything that is upon the earth, and conquering it by suffering. Yet so it was with Jesus. He conquered by suffering. He was made perfect by suffering. He showed Himself to be the Son of God by suffering.

Alas, how ready am I to take the consolations of Divine assistance! How slow to walk worthy of this Divine power! How anxious to conciliate the world, to influence the world, to have the world's praise! How slow to separate myself from the world, to be set aside by the world, to bear the world's scorn!

'Crucify, crucify!' Let me hear this cry going up continually. O world, what wilt thou crucify? Surely thou wilt crucify that which I love, that for which I would live, that wherein I must die if I am to live eternally.

O when I hear the shouts of hatred which the sight of Jesus occasioned in that multitude, I must not think that I can make the truth of Jesus acceptable to the world by any commendation of my own wisdom or tact. This is He who spake as never man spake. This is He against whom His very enemies can find no fault at all. This is He who has wrought miracles without number for the benefit of multitudes. This is He whom multitudes ere

now have sought to make a King. This is He who raised Lazarus from the dead. This is He who entered in royal triumph into Jerusalem but a few days ago. Now He stands before the throngs assembled, and Pilate proclaims His innocence, and all cry out against Him that He may be crucified.

O Jesu, Thy Divine Presence wakens the world's hatred. O let me live in the hiddenness of Thy love. O let the world hate me for Thy sake, while it beholds in me Thy grace; but let not the world hate Thee for my sake, because I mar Thy glory by my sins.

My son, thou must learn to bear the hatred of the world. Yea, there is none of My gifts which the world can value in its truth. Whatever gifts of Mine thou wouldst apprehend, be sure that the world will hate thee for it, ere thou hast apprehended it. If My gifts are emptied of their Divine substance, then will the world applaud them; but if My gifts shine out with Divine honour, then will the world shrink from them.

O Lord, if it be the characteristic of Thy saints that the world ever hates them, I seek not to be exempted from the law. Alas! the worldliness of mine own heart makes me shrink from Thy Presence within myself. O how often do I try to put away the consciousness of Thy will, and stifle the operation of Thy grace. Alas! I crucify Thee within myself by my sinfulness, instead of letting myself be led forth by Thy Holy Spirit to be crucified in the fellowship of Thy righteous-

ness. I hear Thy Voice within me calling me to crucify the flesh, and my heart rises up against Thee, to crucify Thee anew that I may indulge my carnal will.

Be upon the watch, My son. It is no small matter. Truly thou must crucify Me, or be crucified with Me. Marvel not at thine own reluctance, but marvel at the power of My grace. Only be careful never to think that thou canst win the world to approve that which I love. The judgment of the world may pronounce Me faultless, but the heart of the world will hate within Me the power of God.

Yea, Lord. The world knoweth Thee not, nor can the world know any that are Thine. Truly Thou knowest those that are Thine. O let me be hidden from the world that Thou mayest be manifest to me, and that I may be manifest to Thee by the power of Thy Spirit dwelling within me.

MEDITATION XLVII.

Pilate's Wife.

And while he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.—St. Matt. xxvii. 19.

1. The Message to the Judgment-Seat.

Consider Pilate sitting on the judgment-seat, and receiving the admonition from his wife. Judicial position, and natural affection! It is God who warns us by the obligations of natural relationship. How great is the aggravation of our responsibility arising from such surroundings as come to us by professional requirements and domestic sympathies!

God has placed us in society in order that we may have both a sphere in which to exercise the social duties which are necessary for the development of man's nature, and also the safeguard of external guardianships in the knowledge that the eyes of others are upon us, and their hearts are interested in our well-being.

Our social surroundings constitute our greater self, and the regard of mankind round about us is a development of the human law of conscience. When we know how others are likely to judge of our conduct on any particular occasion, we gain a more

impartial decision than our own conscience is apt to give. True, the judgment of sinners may urge us to sin, as a perverted judgment, but that is because they are evil. God originally intended us to have the help of mutual strength. The sin which is mixed with human counsel is not a true element of human nature. Indeed, it is so far from being a true element, that we can generally detect the evil in the maxims of sinful counsellors, although we may be blind to the sinfulness of the suggestions of our own hearts. When sinners advocate sin, there are many indications to make us aware of the erroneousness of their counsel.

How ought we to be thankful when the voice of nature, speaking in those who are round about us, calls us to moral rectitude! We do not look for spiritual counsel to the multitude. The teaching of the Spirit comes to us through the organization of the Church. Nevertheless, even the moral sense which utters itself through the lips of our fellow-men, speaking as men, does frequently call us to such conduct as will make us more sensitive to spiritual demands. The common sense of right and wrong serves to us often as the rails along which a carriage has to run, although it does not supply the force of the steam-engine by which alone it can be propelled.

Represent to thy mind the judge as he received the admonition from his wife. What a strong feeling rose up within him as to his judicial duty and responsibility! It was a reminder to him that his action would itself have to abide a strict judgment. He would be made to feel that others were involved

in the consequences of any dereliction on his own part from a course of firmness and truth. He himself acknowledged that the Prisoner before him was a just Man, and now the message which he receives emphasizes that justice which Pilate himself had proclaimed. His wife warns him of his present freedom: 'Have nothing to do with that just Man.' Why should he involve himself in a religious quarrel which did not concern him? Would not his sense of Roman justice raise him above all the partisanship of Jewish superstition? The spiritual claims of the Prophet were not such that he could enter into their consideration; but the moral claim of an innocent man was what he, in his office as judge, could not set aside.

These would be some of the thoughts which his wife's message must have suggested to him. The general principle of duty would save him from being entrapped into any unworthy conduct of expediency to please the heads of a powerful faction.

O Lord Jesus, grant that I may always be watchful to act true to all principles of justice; for truly Thou art that Just One whose cause can never be separated from the calls of truth and honour.

Yea, My son, act evermore according to the truth, and the truth shall make thee free from the deceits of any particular interest wherein the strife of men may entangle thee.

O Lord, keep me in Thy continual remembrance, that I may behold Thee at all times present, and act in all things for Thy glory.

2. The Wife's Dream.

Doubtless there had been much stir on the part of the high priests to have all in readiness for the sudden and hasty trial of Jesus in the early morning. Peter's wife would therefore naturally be alive to the anxieties of the moment. The cries of the multitude as they gathered round while the trial was going on before Annas and Caiaphas, and followed on with Jesus to the Prætorium, would be the first sounds of the day to which she would awake. The fear of a Jewish rebellion, which was so constantly present to her mind at times of the great feasts, would upon this occasion be especially brought out by the consciousness of the great stand which the authorities were making against the great Prophet. Of Him she might, indeed, know nothing more than was gathered from general rumour; but she would be quite ready to acknowledge a supernatural character in Him in whom so many mighty works had shown themselves forth.

That she should have an anxious dream was, therefore, nothing wonderful; but we must also attribute this dream to the superintending action of Divine Providence.

Even the natural law which predisposes our nature to such disturbances is a token of God's love, who would rouse us thereby to greater watchfulness. We should be attentive to the presentiments of nature, not so as to be anxious in the foolish expectation of things improbable, but to be careful in our action that all may be done rightly. God, who has given

us this faculty of presentiment, will often use it as a means of personal intervention to warn and guide us. So we may feel assured that on this occasion the warning was no accident of nature, but an ordinance of Divine Love.

God in His love will act towards all His creatures, and not only towards the children of His covenanted grace. He seeks by such action to draw into the kingdom of His grace those who are outside. If they reject His teaching, the fault is theirs. Surely Pilate might have been brought into the kingdom of heaven if he had only given heed to this warning of his wife. A small matter, which the natural heart sets aside as accidental, worthless, purposeless, may often be the turning-point of our probation. A small matter ceases to be small when it indicates to us the necessity of watchfulness in the fulfilment of an ordinary duty. It gathers greatness from the duty to which it points, and it is lifted up above the sphere of accident into that of moral and eternal truth.

O Lord Jesu, surely Thou showest Thyself to us in the smallest accidents of life, writing mysteriously upon the wall, so that if we are attentive we may learn Thy Will.

Blessed are those eyes which are ever looking out for Me. They shall learn more than any wisdom of the world can teach. O My son, I long to find teachable hearts. To them will I make known mysteries of love for their guidance amidst earthly doubts, and their encouragement in reaching out after heavenly rewards.

Dear Lord, why is it that my heart is so prone to cling to earthly things, instead of looking up to Thee? Surely the pride of this world's power and the anxieties of this world's position make me regard the things of the heavenly kingdom too often as idle dreams. Alas! I am worse than Pilate in my negligence. He knew not Thee. He had not the constant guidance of Thy Holy Spirit. I know Thee, and Thy Spirit guides me; yet too often I treat the laws of Thy heavenly kingdom as if they were not to be measured against the things of this lower world.

O My son, be ever watchful. Listen for the still small voice of My Holy Spirit speaking in thy heart. He does not speak loudly, so that the inattentive may hear; but gently, so that they who listen faithfully may be guided to their reward. Listen, and thou shalt not fail. Obey His suggestions, and thou shalt obtain all that I have promised, and more than thou canst hope.

Even so, Lord. Yea! blessed be Thy Name, who callest me with such watchful tenderness and love. Help me evermore to live true to Thee, and listen to Thy Voice. Amidst all the distractions of the world, let me seek the guidance of Thy loving Voice.

3. Suffering by Reason of Jesus.

Pilate's wife suffered many things during the night because of Him, in anticipation of the vengeance which would follow upon an unjust condemna-

tion. If the anticipation was great, how much more terrible the reality!

Blessed would that anticipation have been, if it had led to a real care to glorify Jesus. The reality has become all the more terrible because the anticipation was unheeded.

And how is it now? How must we look forward to the wrath of the Lamb which shall be exerted against those who will not give heed to Him! For judgment is He come into this world; but the judgment which is now being carried on without notice shall be exerted in the end in fearful manifestation of Divine wrath.

We must not think that the Divine love will fail to vindicate the majesty of Him who came in love to redeem mankind at the first, but will come again to doom all those who have not received Him. That love rests upon the only begotten Son, and none can share it who do not seek it in Him. Jesus stood before the judgment-seat of Pilate, but He was the representative of a mightier empire than that from which Pilate received his short-lived authority. The better kingdom shall have no end. This is He who, though delivered by Pilate to the fury of the Jews, did not die by their power, but by the self-surrender of His own Spirit in obedience to the Father's will. He is gone to receive unto Himself a kingdom and to return, and those His enemies who would not that He should reign over them must be brought into His Presence and slain before Him.

The great trouble of that day shall not be the criminality of nature enslaved to corruption by the

fall, but the rejection of Christ by those who rebelled against His covenant of grace. Christ, who is the central principle of pardon, becomes, when set at nought, the central principle of punishment, which shall break out in fiery vengeance to consume the adversaries. 'Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him' (Rev. i. 7).

Would that we might be so troubled during the night-season of earthly life, that in the day of the Lord we might have our rest in the welcome of His love! Blessed they who are troubled for Him now, if then they are able to enter into His rest! (2 Thess. i. 7). To be troubled for Him, suffering on His behalf, how blessed a portion it is! To be troubled because of Him, as those whose natural heart cherishes enmity against the Lord and His Anointed, how terrible it shall be!

Alas! we are too apt to fly from the suffering of His Cross, and then we fly to the suffering of His anger.

Pilate had but to speak one word. That word might have involved the loss of Cæsar's friendship. That word might have occasioned a general uprising of the Jewish nation in revolt. Yet if Pilate had given Jesus the protection of that one word, Pilate would have had the protection of the Incarnate Word and the Eternal Benediction.

Craven are those fears which begin in hatred and end in destruction. Yet how many hearts there are who go on fearing Christ, and will not give Him

their love! He suffered for them, but they have still to suffer for themselves; yea! to suffer a double sentence for their sins for which He died, and for His atoning sacrifice whose sufferings they have rejected.

O blessed Jesu, as Thou hast suffered for me, help me to suffer for Thee, that I may partake of Thy glory. Open mine eyes to behold Thy love wherewith Thou hast suffered, that I may in every suffering look up to Thee, and show forth before Thee the loving gratitude whereby I may claim Thee as my Saviour.

My son, let not thine heart be troubled if thou believest in Me. Rejoice when trouble comes, for great shall be thy reward in heaven.

O Lord, indeed I am troubled because I have so grievously sinned against Thee. While I bear this trouble I would truly seek to sin no more. Yet is my nature so weak that I am troubled, not only with the sins of the past, but with grievous fear lest I may fall into the same sins again. Lord Jesu, hold Thou me up. Deliver me from myself. I am troubled by the thought of Thee, and yet my only joy and confidence is in the remembrance of Thee.

My son, if thou art troubled because thou hast offended Me, thou dost make Me to rejoice because I have redeemed thee. Blessed is the trouble of penitence. The angels rejoice along with Me in the welome of the penitent. Nor is thy trouble less blessed wherewith thou deplorest thy weakness. In thy distrust of self

draw near to Me with perfect confidence, so will I make manifest the all-sufficiency of My grace in thy renewal. Great shall be thine experience of My joy, if thou dost thus learn to own thyself wholly dependent upon Me for all that is past, and all that is to come.

Dear Lord, on Thee alone can I rely. Thou art my only Hope. In Thee would I claim the blessings which the Father has promised. In Thee His love finds its satisfaction. In Thee would my love find its life. To rely upon Thee is to live in peace; but they who rely upon anything outside of Thee can only find trouble for evermore.

MEDITATION XLVIII.

Pilate's Questioning.

When Pilate therefore heard this saying, he was the more afraid; and he entered into the palace again, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore saith unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee? Jesus answered him, Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin.—St. John xix. 8-11.

1. 'Whence art Thou?'

The Jews denied not the innocence of Jesus, but they could not tolerate His claim to be the Son of God. Pilate, when He heard that claim, trembled. Again he examines Jesus in the inner chamber of justice.

'Whence art Thou?' He feels that the claim now freshly put before him implies a life that springs not from the lower world. He could, indeed, easily believe that one of the gods might come down upon earth. The gods which Rome worshipped were only idealized forms of created life acting according to human laws. He could not grasp the thought of the one true God and of His only Son. Yet was there a power in any spiritual presence which must make the natural heart quake. He quaked even the more, because it was the only form of power that could thus baffle him.

In truth, also, that form of spiritual presence

which he could recognize is more suited to touch the human heart than a truer sense of Divine presence would be. It comes more within the reach of human apprehension. The human mind feels it as a power akin to itself and measures it by itself. The Jew had a higher idea of God, and felt that God belonged to a different sphere of existence. The Divine claim of Jesus moved the hatred of the Jews, because it made the nothingness of created life the more manifest by its own infinity. Therefore we shall always find that superstition exerts a greater power amongst men than true religion does. The objects of superstition are cognizable by human effort, but the ways of God are far above, out of the sight of man.

Pilate felt that a superhuman being demanded a special consideration. He was not moved by a true sense of worship making him the more careful in the administration of justice, because he was responsible to God as the witness of all his conduct in all that he might do. He felt that one who claimed to be the Son of God would vindicate His own claim, but after all it would only be in the self-seeking spirit of any earthly potentate. He began to feel that he must be careful what he did to Jesus, for Jesus might suddenly let loose some power in vengeance for personal injury. He did not apprehend that the Infinite God was present in the Person of Jesus, ready to avenge an injustice done to the poorest and feeblest of His creatures. So does superstition drain off the fear of God in certain channels wherein it thinks to find a Divine power at work, whereas true devotion recognizes religion as an atmosphere illu-

minating the whole of daily life. Pilate did not open his eyes to see the necessity of just dealing with a helpless prisoner because God would watch over such a case. He trembled lest He might incur a supernatural displeasure by behaving ignorantly in close dealing with a finite manifestation of a supernatural presence.

The question which Pilate put was quite irrelevant to the occasion. His duty to the prisoner before him did not depend upon who that prisoner was, or whence he came. He had a duty, an act of justice, to perform, which was just the same whether the prisoner were of earthly or of heavenly origin, God or man.

O Jesu, let me be upon the watch, for surely Thou meetest me continually under various forms in daily life. Help me so to recognize in every relationship the duty which I owe to Thee, that in every relationship I may find the blessing which comes from Thee.

My son, there is no relationship of life wherein God is not the ultimate Object of thine action. All acts of justice are modes of approach to Him. Ask not, then, whether any act involves a duty which He may demand of thee, but act upon every occasion with the assurance that thou must give account to Him of all thou doest.

O Lord, speak to me, I pray Thee, in all the relationships of life, that amidst all outward accidents I may remember my responsibility.

Listen for My Voice, My son, and My Voice shall not be wanting to thee; but thou must listen with obedient love. If thou wilt act with true remembrance of Me, however I may be hidden under veils which the natural heart may treat with scorn, thou shalt find My Voice speaking to thee to guide thee and bless thee. If thou act not as My Presence requires, because I do not show that Presence in its sovereign power, thou turnest a deaf ear to My word of blessing, and I can speak to thee no more.

O Lord Jesu, truly Thou art the Mediator by whom we have access to the Father. Thou hast taken upon Thyself our nature, and Thou meetest us in every act of human life. By nature all our relationships point to God as their Source. By grace Thou hallowest all those relationships with a life wherein God is the Consummation. O let me feel Thy Divine Presence, and so serve Thee under the discipline of grace, that I may attain to behold Thee in the revelation of glory.

2. The Silence of Jesus.

Jesus speaks to the heart that really listens to Him, but He will not speak if we come to Him with unworthy motives. Pilate's question was a question of superstition, not of adoration. He had not the curious delight in the supernatural which made Herod desire to see a miracle, but his motive was not a worthier one. He was afraid of a Presence

which he did not love. He would act without consideration of God unless he could not help it. The Divine claim which he heard ought to awaken him to a sense of duty. He felt its majesty, but he strove to assert himself against its control. He desired to know what was the secret of the power of Jesus that he might deal with it as a phenomenon, and not submit himself to its illumination. He desired to know about Jesus, but he did not desire to rise up to Jesus. He felt the dread of a spiritual Presence opposed to Him, but not the purifying, illuminating joy of a spiritual Presence assisting Him. He saw Jesus before him, and sat upon his seat to judge Jesus. He did not see himself as one who must appear before the judgment-seat of Jesus to give account of his conduct in that office which now he had to execute towards Jesus.

Jesus, therefore, did not speak to him. Had He revealed Himself, He would not have raised the heart of Pilate to moral perception, though He might have overawed Him in outward submission. The heart of a judge which was not touched by the sight of such human suffering amidst acknowledged innocence could not respond to the call of Divine love, however resistless might be the manifestation of power.

The silence of Jesus towards Pilate was therefore judicial, in that Pilate's moral failure unfitted him to use any further revelation of Christ without injury to his own moral nature. There must be a readiness to love Christ when revealed. Otherwise the revelation of Christ turns to our destruction.

At the same time, the silence of Jesus was dis-

ciplinary. There was a revelation vouchsafed even in the withholding of the revelation which was desired. Pilate was forced to recognize some mystery in the Personage whom he was addressing. Jesus would not tell him whence He was, but He had already told Pilate that His kingdom was not from hence. By acting thus in entire disregard of Pilate's earthly power, He sought to lead the mind of Pilate to recognize the truth of the heavenly kingdom as a principle of moral activity. If Pilate had risen up to this discipline, he might have received the further revelation. Pilate felt that in that silence there was the withholding of a mysterious dignity. It was the silence of power, not of vacancy. It was a silence which spoke with command. Pilate would not accept the truth when Jesus was ready to speak. Pilate does not now identify himself with the silent power, so as to act in moral conformity with its spiritual teaching. Yet he knows that there is a power hidden beneath the mystery. His own boast dies out before the admonition of Jesus. 'I have power to crucify Thee, and I have power to release Thee.' Such was his vaunt. The silent Prisoner addresses his moral sense with the warning, 'Thou couldest have no power at all against Me unless it were given thee from above.' From thenceforth Pilate sought to release Him. He sought to release Jesus. He did not know that he needed Jesus to release himself that he might become free from a worse bondage than that wherein Jesus stood before him. He was of the world, and content to be of the world. So must he perish with the world.

O Jesu, Thou wilt ever speak to those who come to Thee with the humble suit of love. Surely it is in Thy very love that Thou remainest silent when the unloving heart appeals to Thee.

Yea, My son. Those who seek Me in love shall in that love be led onward to hear the mysteries of My inmost truth. Listen to Me in love, and thou shalt find My love speaking to thee in ever renewed manifestations. But the spirit of love must fill thy heart and draw thee unto Me. The world shall hear My Voice in the last day, and it shall be the destruction of the world. Now do I speak in secret love to loving souls, that I may perfect them in the truth.

O Lord, I know Thee whence Thou art, even the Only Begotten of the Father; and yet I know not whence Thou art, for the glory whence Thou comest is far on high, so that I cannot behold it. Yet do I so know Thee as to be led onward to love Thee. Lead me, then, in the knowledge which belongs to love, so that I may attain to know Thee, and to know whence Thou art, with the fulness of spiritual illumination, becoming like to Thyself while I experience the transforming power of Thy truth speaking within me.

Give thyself up to Me, O My son. Live in My love according to the measure of thine opportunities on earth; so shalt thou be filled with My light in never-ending manifestations. Thou shalt attain to know whence I am, for I will take thee to be with Me where I am. Re-

spond to Me in the truth of love, however feeble thou mayest be, and I will teach thee in the truth of love with all the fulness of the wisdom of God.

Dear Lord, teach me to love Thee. I ask not knowledge which may be too excellent for me, but I ask for love that I may know Thee in all the excellence of Thy Divine utterance.

3. The World and God.

Pilate knew the power of the world. He felt the power of God before him; but that power he knew not, because he loved it not. He loved the world, hoping to retain the mastery of the world. He loved not God, unwilling to give himself up to be the servant of God. Both the world and God appealed to him: the world with violent outcries, God with mysterious apprehensions.

O my soul, is it not so with thine own self continually? The world and God appeal to thee: the world with many voices from without, God with silent admonitions from within. The voice of the Almighty is a still small voice. The voice of the world is noisy and imperious. The heart of man is deceived. It seems as if I must listen to the world in order to keep the world's power, and yet so to listen is to become the world's slave.

Pilate made himself the world's slave, thinking thereby to retain a power which otherwise would be imperilled. Such, indeed, is the law of all power derived from the world below. It can only be

retained by accepting a relation of bondage to that which we seek to govern. Power which comes from below does not bring life. It encumbers and enchains the energies which it seems to nourish. There can be no true power except it be given from above. From above comes living power, which we may exercise along with Christ in triumph over the world of death. From above comes also even the accidental power which we may have, so as to act along with the world against Christ. The civil power was a trust from God, and therefore the sin of Caiaphas was the greater, because he was invoking a God-given power in antagonism to God Himself. Jesus would not say to Pilate whence He Himself came, for that would not supply a proper moral motive, but He calls to Pilate's mind the consideration of whence Pilate himself came. If Pilate would recognize his own Divine responsibility, he would be in a position to receive a Divine revelation respecting Christ.

Surely 'power belongeth unto God;' and if we recognize the fellowship of God in the exercise of Divine power, we shall find the life and the joy of God and holy illumination, so that we may exercise it more and more. This power is living power. They who submit to it are raised to reign along with God, whereas those who acknowledge their power as given by the world must perish with the world.

From age to age the world makes boast of its power. 'We are they that ought to speak: who is lord over us?' (Ps. xii. 4). From age to age the discipline of faith is being carried on, that men may

learn to rely upon the Divine weakness rather than the human strength. 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts' (Zech. iv. 6). The world is but a bubble, even at the best. It bursts, and then its worthlessness is seen. The power of God unto salvation is a communicated life, and according to the measure of our discipline will be our experience of its reality.

O Lord, open the ear of my heart to attend to Thy holy Voice speaking to me. In all the duties of my calling Thou art leading me to fuller gifts of revelation; and as Thou showest to me the dependence of my whole being upon Thy Divine Will, Thou revealest to me the all-sufficiency of Thy power to accomplish Thy purposes in my feebleness. I can do nothing but by Thine help. Restrain me, that I may attempt nothing save according to Thy commandment.

My son, remember what I said unto Mine Apostles: 'All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore into all the world.' So do I speak to thee, having called thee into the Apostolical ministry. Whatever thou doest in the power of the Spirit which I have given, shall be made to prosper according to the life which I have in Myself. Fear, then, none of those things which may come upon thee in the world. Be not moved by the world's outcry. It can enslave, but it cannot give life. Live in My life, and thou shalt find the freedom of God.

O blessed Jesu, life is worth nothing unless I live in Thy love. How can I fear the world if I have once known what it is to live with Thee? Pardon the waywardness of my fallen nature. Alas! how clearly dost Thou show Thyself to me, and then in my blindness I go away and forget Thee! I resolve to fulfil Thy commands, and then the world and the flesh get me back again under their dominion. Let it not be so any longer. Strengthen me to act according to Thy Voice. Thou teachest me by many an utterance; Thou guidest me by many a silence. Hold me to Thyself, and work along with me in all my actions. So shall I grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Thy truth. O let me lose all power of hearing what the world may say. Its promises and its threats are both alike nothingness. The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth Thy Will, O my God, shall abide for ever.

MEDITATION XLIX.

Caesar the King.

Upon this Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar. When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment-seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation of the passover: it was about the sixth hour. And he saith unto the Jews, Behold, your King! They therefore cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar. Then therefore he delivered him unto them to be crucified.—St. John xix. 12–16.

1. Pilate seeking to release Jesus.

How the enslaved soul seeks at times to act on higher principles, and yet it finds itself incapable of doing so!

'Upon this.' Some occasion may waken the soul to an effort, but an effort which is only occasional cannot be effectual for good. All true moral action must be the outcome of continuous living power. No occasional impression, however great, can take the place of true living principle. If we are to serve Jesus, we must do so by the continuous dedication of our lives. The consciousness of eternal truth must be a fixed gaze; not contingent upon transitory phenomena, but abiding in communion with that which changes not. Evermore must we be lifting up our hearts to God, the Eternal Truth, to rest in Him, to act in Him, to correspond with His continuous guidance.

Pilate sought to release Jesus, but did not do it. He had the power. He knew that he had the power. But there was a stronger power holding him back. He wanted to see his way. He would not act upon his convictions. So it is with ourselves. We cannot act true to Jesus if we are looking for earthly means of serving Him. He does not want the assistance of earthly means. He does require the freedom of heart which will serve Him irrespectively of all such considerations. In this sinful world Jesus is ever as a Prisoner. To act true to Him is to break a bond which binds Him. We have to release Him not merely as a prisoner from some temporary difficulty, but because He is the King whose word we have to obey. Because He is the King the world binds Him, refusing submission. Because He is our King we must release Him, giving obedience. He demands the release. We act, not as being masters of the position, but as being His subjects, whatever the position may be.

For, indeed, whenever we have to do anything for Jesus, in spite of worldly opposition, we are releasing Him. We may seem to be asserting our own freedom; we are really asserting His freedom, proclaiming His sovereignty. That were no righteous act which might be done of our own free-will. We act for Him alone. The world hates and binds not us, but Him. He is either a Prisoner or a King. If we assert His freedom, He will assert ours.

We must take care that we maintain the cause of Jesus for His sake. We are not to think that we are caring for His liberty because we are self-willed

in maintaining our own. If we would release Him, we must be ready to be bound for Him. We must also rejoice rather to be bound with Jesus than to have any freedom without Him. We cannot set Jesus free without being bound ourselves. It is no act of human freedom whereby we serve Jesus. Unless we serve Him with a sense of necessity, we are not serving Him at all. He can accept no patronizing service. Our acts must be done obediently, humbly.

O Jesu, can it be that Thou art willing to leave Thy freedom in the world to the risk of one so feeble and so faithless as I am! Help me to act truly for Thee. Surely my soul must feel bound in misery if I cannot rouse myself to do Thy will. I or Thou! I must not shrink from being bound if I would set Thee free. I cannot claim the world's freedom for myself unless I surrender Thy cause to the world. O never let me do so. Thou hast released me from the bondage of nature. Let me ever assert Thy freedom in the sovereignty of grace, rejoicing to be Thy servant.

My son, My freedom never faileth for any who will live in its power. If thou seekest the freedom of the world, thou wilt be bound under the world's tyranny; but if thou seek to confess Me before men, thou shalt find that no power can bind thee or harm thee.

O Lord, the world, if it binds me with outward bonds as Thy servant, can only make me feel more fully the blessedness of the freedom which Thou givest.

Worse is it when my heart feels that Thou art bound within me by my own connivance at the world's miserable will. Then do I indeed feel a miserable slavery. If Thou art bound within me, then am I bound, however free I may outwardly boast to be. If I am acting in the liberty of Thy sovereignty, then am I free, even though the world bind me outwardly with the bondage of manifold hate.

2. The Friendship of Cæsar.

Jesus comes to set the world free from the tyranny of Satan. Yet the world cries out against Him. Yea, the world cries out as if the prince of this world were the power whose friendship should be chiefly desired.

'Not Cæsar's friend.' The claims of Christ seem to the world as if they imperilled all that the world cares for. How little do they know of the unspeakable blessings which are exhaled on every side from the presence of Jesus! There is a fragrance, a refreshing power, an illuminating joy, which Jesus gives to all who seek Him. Yet the world prefers the hard mastery, the grinding tyranny, of powers which seek to take the place that Jesus should hold. Where will the world, the flesh, and the devil be, if Jesus has full sway? All powers of evil are terrified, if man breaks away from the friendship of the prince of this world; and yet that friendship is a miserable tyranny.

O what a transformed world of heavenly joy would that be in which Jesus reigned supreme! O

what a joyous elasticity would the flesh find, if the energy of Jesus replaced the impulses of its sinful desires! Do we hug the tyranny of Satan so closely that we cannot part with it? Ah! the Jews felt the galling bond of Cæsar's yoke. It was only when the cause of Jesus was at stake that they could welcome it! Theirs was a welcome of lying words even then, and not of love! Welcome only given to Cæsar because Jesus was the Object of their hate! How strange it is to love the world out of hatred to Jesus! Yet this is what men do continually.

The Jews could threaten Pilate with the loss of Cæsar's friendship, if he were not with them against Jesus. They knew that they hated Cæsar. They knew that Pilate loved him not, although he feared to lose his friendship; yet they knew that no more powerful motive could be suggested to Pilate than the loss of that friendship. There were many acts of wrong-dealing of which the Jews could accuse Pilate to the emperor. He must make himself secure against all those charges by now committing himself to the greatest injustice of all.

So it is that the knowledge of past faults gives the world a purchase over the soul. The soul fears to hold out against the world, because it knows so many secrets of its own past life, which would bring upon it the world's contempt if it once broke with the world. It strives to keep outwardly at one with the world, because it knows that it is not inwardly at one with God.

The cause of God in the world is always attended with feebleness, and always will be. This gives

opportunity for the development of faith; whereas if the cause of Jesus had any backing of worldly power, it would win men to follow it by merely natural considerations, without any real acceptance of Divine authority. Jesus must be chosen for God's sake in opposition to the world. Otherwise we cannot choose Him, even though by accident we may side with His cause.

Pilate shrinks from espousing the cause of Jesus. It is feeble, unable to help or save him. He has the power of releasing the innocent Prisoner if he will; but his high position which gives him the power makes the world's friendship necessary for him in a very special manner. The power of the world chains the very hand that wields it. The friendship of Cæsar is a terrible snare if we have it, because there is so much at stake in losing it.

Various are the powers of the world which are thus represented by the person of Cæsar. In different spheres of life the world assumes various personifications. We are as much in danger from one as from another.

O Jesu, let not the friendship of the world ever hold me back from Thee. Let not its enjoyments make me indifferent to Thee, nor the fear of losing it make me shrink from confessing Thee.

My son, the world abhors the thought of Me because I have conquered the world; but if thou choosest Me and not the world, I will make thee to reign over the world.

O Lord, how difficult is it to rest in the confidence of Thy victory when the world round about me seems to be so powerful! Nevertheless what Thou hast spoken Thou surely wilt perform, and I know that the friendship of the world is enmity against God. Reign Thou in my heart, and let me repudiate every power which does not confess Thy supremacy.

O My son, thou seest what a hold of tyranny the world exercises over its slaves. Be thou ever watchful to serve Me with an equal devotion. Call none thy friends who are not Mine. I have put thee in trust to guard Mine honour wherever thou mayest be. I have called thee as My friend to act for Me in the world. Take heed that thou lose not My friendship. I gave up all the world for the glory of the Father. Fear not thou to lose anything in the world for My glory. All that I have is thine. Only thou must be true to Me.

Yea, Lord, I do indeed desire to be faithful to Thee. Why should I desire the world's friendship when my great desire is to leave it? There is nothing which I can gain by its friendship to satisfy my soul. Its nothingness cannot harm those who are free from it, but its nothingness can destroy those who rely on it.

3. 'No King but Cæsar.'

Pilate fears to lose Cæsar's friendship. Therefore he cannot do what is just to Jesus. The Jews will purchase the tyranny of Cæsar if only they can drive Jesus away thereby.

How strange is this hatred of Jesus! Whence comes it? It is because Jesus is the Truth, the living, sovereign Truth. Therefore is it that the world hates Him. The world is falsehood, and falsehood must hate truth. Truth is a controlling power. Falsehood is an uncontrolled waywardness, ever seeking power, never finding any power that abides, always feeling its own instability, the treachery of all its possessions, when the eternal truth is present to its consciousness. Amidst the flow of changing circumstance the world can accommodate itself to the things of the moment. It does not then feel its own inherent falsehood. When eternal truth is at hand, then it must compare its own transitory good with the goodness which abides; and thus it is forced to despise all that it desires to honour.

So the world will have no king but Cæsar, the prince of the world. A worldly tyranny suits it better than an eternal sovereignty of truth and love.

Sovereignty of falsehood and hate! That is what the world desires! An outward sovereignty from which the heart of the subject rebels! A sovereignty of compulsion, exacting obedience which is grudgingly given, with a view to some distant object of desire, but without any living unity to identify the tyrant and the slave!

O how different this from the loyalty of love which should bind man to man, and all men to God! How different is the sovereign who is loved by reason of Divine truth and relationships which God

has instituted, from the sovereign who is accepted as a necessary evil because of worldly interest varying every moment!

We see Jesus the true Object of love! An unloving world cannot love Him. We see Cæsar the powerful despot! A cringing world can accept him.

To accept Cæsar is to accept the tyranny as a whole. We cannot give a divided service—partly to Christ, the Prince of heaven, and partly to Satan, the prince of the world. Christ Himself had said, not many days before His trial, 'Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.' But He did not thereby allow any division of heart-service. Over the outer domain of life Cæsar may reign by Divine appointment, but the Messianic King was to rise with higher tokens of Divine power. The Child of Messianic hope had within Himself a realm of thought over which Cæsar's empire could not hold. Cæsar's empire ceased with death. The kingdom of the truth to which the Jews were called was a kingdom which death could not affect. To know no king but Cæsar was to ignore the blessed sovereignty of the eternal life which was to be revealed.

How little did the Jews realize, when they disavowed having any king but Cæsar, that they were most emphatically proclaiming Jesus as Messiah! The sceptre could not depart from Judah until Shiloh came. If, then, there was no king to whom they could look but Cæsar only, it was manifest that Messiah must have come, unless they would

cast away all the promises of God. It was in the providence of God that the claims of Jesus should be met by the distinct avowal that David's earthly throne had failed. The Lord of David is come. He is now about to quit this lower world. He will lift the throne of David to the heavenly height, and sit and reign a Priest upon His throne, at the right hand of God.

O blessed Jesu, help me to realize the glory of Thy heavenly kingdom. Let no earthly power crush my heart. Illuminate me with Thy Holy Spirit, that I may contemplate Thy glory.

Now, My son, the kingdom is come which the God of heaven promised to set up in the last days—a kingdom that should never be destroyed. 'All the earth shall be filled with His majesty.' Thou seest the feebleness wherein I stood before the Jews while they disavowed Me. Thou must recognize herein the eternal strength, wherewith the Father would thereby acknowledge Me. Vain were all display of earthly power. That was quite incapable of attesting My Divine mission. The feebleness through which I pass to death, and the glory of the resurrection which shall follow, these are such a guarantee of My Divine claims that no power on earth can overthrow.

O gracious Lord, I look to Thee with the full surrender of faith. Other lords have had dominion over me, but now I give myself to Thee alone. The

power of Cæsar was given from above, but it was only a power for earthly exercise. Thou rulest in the fulness of a heavenly power, abiding in unity of life with the Father. Thou only art the Lord. Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art Most High in the glory of God the Father.

MEDITATION L.

Pilate's Repudiation.

So when Pilate saw that he prevailed nothing, but rather that a tumult was arising, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man: see ye *to it*. . . . Then released he unto them Barabbas: but Jesus he scourged and delivered to be crucified.—St. Matt. xxvii. 24, 26.

1. Pilate washing his Hands.

Although Pilate submitted to the decision of the Jews, he wished to show as emphatically as possible that the act of sending Jesus to be crucified was their act, not his own. It was not a sentence of Roman justice pronounced against a criminal. It was an act of national hatred pronounced against one whose innocency Pilate had proclaimed.

Miserable man, sitting on the throne of judgment, to allow himself thus to be the tool of a faction for the perpetration of a murder!

In washing his hands he was accepting an act of Jewish symbolism, so that all persons present at the trial might know exactly how the matter stood, and all who heard of it might be left without doubting.

Pilate wanted to clear himself, but there was a Divine Providence overruling his action for higher purposes. It was needful that the Jewish nation should be left without excuse, that no future ages might suppose that there had been any criminality

chargeable against Him whom the Jews rejected, but who was the Elect Servant in whom the Father delighted.

What a manifestation of the weakness of all that is strongest in the earth, that the imperiousness of a Roman governor should thus give way before the clamour of a despised and disaffected people!

Pilate might wash his hands; but it was not his hands which did the evil deed. His lips pronounced the unjust decision. His hands proclaimed unwittingly the truth in that he wrote, 'Rex Judæorum.' He could not separate himself from complicity in this transaction.

How strange was the moral blindness which could affect a position of externality to an act which was simply dependent upon his own utterance!

Pilate could only deceive himself by this transaction. The Jews knew that they had made him submit.

How small a stratagem will suffice to make us deceive ourselves, by throwing the blame of some great wrong upon others, when it is really our own will which ought to bear it! In that washing of the hands, Pilate was acting as a traitor to truth by letting an innocent Man be put to death, and a traitor to the imperial government by allowing a mob to hold the reins of government.

O Jesu, make the light of Thy truth so to shine in my heart, that I may never yield to those false excuses which are so apt to lead me away from steadfast allegiance to Thee. I cannot lose my share in what is

done with my concurrence. The tribunal of an earthly superior would not acquit me for yielding; much less will Thine own tribunal. O let me always be watchful to remember that I must give account to Thee! Now the world seems strong, demanding my submission; but how feeble will the world be found in the great day of Thy judgment! How will words of assent then make the soul guilty of criminal acts which others have done, and no washing of the hands will be able to nullify the guilt thereof!

Trust not in power, My son, as if thou couldst put a gulf between thyself and those who wait upon thy judgment. Whatever is done by thy permission is thine own act. On one word, Yes or No, may hang an irreparable eternity.

O Lord, give me Thy grace that I may always be bold on Thy behalf. Surely to wash my hands is to confess a guilt needing to be cleansed. O fruitless self-excusing! I cannot separate myself thereby from what is done.

No, My son. There is no artifice whereby thou canst deceive Me. I read the heart, and the heart contains the record of every unfaithfulness which no external disavowal can undo.

Holy Jesu, Judge of all, keep me ever mindful that Thou art concerned in all my actions and my very words. Surely my words often reach further than my acts. My outward act is but the act of one. My word of command results in the act of many. Let me not deceive myself. I know I cannot deceive Thee.

Before every action let me pause for Thine approval, that after every action I may receive Thy blessing.

2. The Abuse of Power.

How terrible is the gift of power which upon such small acts may eventuate in such vast consequences! One word will decide the life of a man, and the eternal condition of him that utters it. We may think to put the act away from us because it is not done in our sight, but we are none the less the doers of the action because a multitude gather round to bring it into effect. Many are the occasions on which we have to pass judgment in secrecy and solitude, and yet the consequences of that decision extend beyond all possibility of calculation.

Feebleness is one of the greatest of powers, if it allows a powerful clique to get out of our hands the control of what truly belongs to our own selves to determine.

It is a miserable thing to seek the security of power for the future by unfaithfulness in its exercise for the present moment. Who can trust one who has once given way? Allegiance to truth must be unswerving. Truth is itself unchanging, and if power is used untruly it must work the doom of every agent that ignores the truth.

O how blessed is the power of maintaining the cause of the feeble! 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy' (Ps. xli. 1); to see that 'such as are in need and necessity have right' (Ps. lxxxii. 3). To vindicate the oppressed from the hand of one

that is stronger than he, is indeed a Divine work. Judgment is the act of God, and in every action of true love God is both the true Agent, whose co-operation hallows the doer, and God is Himself also the Recipient, who will make a return of blessing; for what is done to one of the least of His people is done to Himself.

Jesus the God-Man is before the tribunal of Pilate. We must remember that we never are doing acts of abstract justice or injustice. The Personal God is always concerned in our action. Right or wrong has no substantive existence except in connection with His Personality. The Incarnation brings out into manifestation, in the surroundings of the life of Jesus, that personal relationship to God which exists at all times in every action, although we do not see God's Presence.

Power belongeth unto God not only as the Giver of power, but as its continual Sustainer. If we forget the Divine relationship, the power will soon cease to be, and the penalty will have to be paid. God who gives power will always look to receive His own with usury. He gives it for the accomplishment of His work, and will multiply it according to the growing necessities of His work; but if it be used to His dishonour, the penalty will be exacted with the greater intensity.

O Jesu, let me feel Thy Presence so gentle, so loving, so patient, that I may always find it my joy to act on Thy behalf according to the truth of Thy holy Will.

Be sure, My son, that I will give thee all thou needest day by day. If thou will look to Me and work along with Me, thou shalt find My power always sustaining thee. Think not of the power which I give, but of Myself as the Giver of the power. Act loyally to Me, and thou shalt never fail.

O Lord Jesu, blessed be Thy Name. With Thee let me ever abide. Weakness along with Thee is strength, and strength without Thee is weakness. O let me abide with Thee in truth and love, that I may always find Thy life as the life of all my actions.

3. The Inevitable Responsibility.

Pilate bore witness to the truth of Jesus by his words, though by his deeds he set Him at nought. He was to bear to Jesus a yet more terrible witness by his sufferings. The innocent Blood which he permitted to be shed by his authority was to cry out against him for vengeance even in time, as it will do in eternity. In his person the power of earth was meeting the power of heaven. He knew not that he was contending against God manifest in the flesh; but however little he might know of the true nature of God, he had received warning, even during the few hours of the trial. This ought to have aroused him to the consciousness of a special responsibility to the unseen God of truth which belonged to him in the exercise of his office. Jesus had warned him respecting the kingdom of the truth wherein He reigned. The Jews had assured him that this

innocent Man claimed in some very real manner to be the Son of God, different from all other men. His wife, as he took his seat for judgment, had sent to bid him abstain from having anything to do with that just Man. His own heart had experienced the wonder of a sovereignty whose power came up before his conscience by the majesty and meekness of this mysterious Personage. If Nebuchadnezzar trembled when he saw a form like a Son of God in the fiery furnace along with the three whom he had bound, much more might Pilate recognize the Divine Presence which clothed the form of this accused Person with a silent awfulness of enduring power which no violence of man could shake, no wounds disturb. In that silence there was indeed 'the word of truth and of meekness-righteousness' (Ps. xlv. 4), so that His 'right hand' grasped 'terrible things' with a living reality of supernatural claim such as to make the sculptured thunderbolts in the hand of Jupiter shrivel up in their emptiness.

Strange blindness which could thus refuse to own the sovereignty of God! The sovereignty, indeed, he could not bring himself to deny. The feeble Form before him claimed no unattested character of magic might, such as an impostor or a fanatic might put forward. He claimed a position of historical reality, fulfilling what the Jewish nation had, amidst all their vicissitudes, acknowledged. The glory of the promised Messiah, which had so often made Rome tremble before infuriated mobs of Jewish zealots, was now present before him, if he would let the eyes of his heart be open to the

vision, sublimely self-contained amidst the violence and mockery of Roman troops, the blasphemies of Jewish persecutors, and the madness of the people.

Could Pilate conceive of himself as changing place with Jesus? Could he suppose himself capable of sustaining that part which Jesus was now carrying out, in the gentle endurance of every possible suffering? He must have felt that it could not be. There was something in the very nature of the Man before him which Pilate had not got. There was a Divine nature of superhuman power united with the human nature wherein Jesus suffered.

Could Pilate think of Jesus as sitting upon his own judgment-seat, and prostituting the authority of his tribunal to the demands of envy, the rage of party spirit, and the turbulent ignorance of the multitude? He must have felt that this would have been impossible.

But he had to think of Jesus changing place with himself. Jesus was now before his seat for judgment. In a short time Jesus would be seated on the throne of power, and Pilate would receive the sentence of Divine truth. He might blind himself to the present and ignore the future, but the reality of the present did not cease to be, and the future would soon display the terrors of his own responsibility amidst the triumph of righteousness and truth.

O Jesu, do Thou illuminate my soul that I may live in remembrance of Thy coming judgment. Be Thou my Joy amidst the difficulties of earthly proba-

tion, that I may find my everlasting portion in the truth of Thy love.

My son, fear not what man can do unto thee. I will protect thee. If thou hast to suffer, I will recompense thee. I am always with thee. Listen to My Voice. To Pilate I would not speak; but I will always speak to thee—speak in thine heart with encouragement and grace. Pilate heeded not what he could perceive; therefore could I give him no further teaching. Listen to Me, and according to the sincerity wherewith thou givest heed to My words shall be the clearness of the revelation which I will bestow. I have wondrous depths of glory to disclose to thee, if thou wilt give Me thine heart; but if thou close thine heart against the truth which thou knowest, thou must be blinded more and more.

O Jesu, to Thee only can I look. On Thee would I rely. Thou only art my Security in the midst of this evil world. Let nothing make me unmindful of Thy demands. Now dost Thou stand beside me in secret, but my heart cannot escape from Thy scrutiny. Thou, who knowest the secrets of the heart, wilt bring all secret things to light when Thou sittest on Thy Judgment-Seat. Now the world seeks to deceive me. Then shall Thy truth prevail.

MEDITATION LI.

The Jewish Nation rejecting Christ.

And all the people answered and said, His blood *be* on us, and on our children.—St. Matt. xxvii. 25.

1. The Imprecation.

The Jews cry out that they will take the responsibility which Pilate seeks to evade. He cannot put off the responsibility. Too terribly may they involve themselves in the guilt of the innocent Blood.

'His Blood be on us, and on our children!'

Did ever a nation call down upon itself such a curse? Did ever a nation find such a doom resting upon it irremediably through ages as the outcome of any similar crisis?

The reality of the imprecation is attested by the reality of its fulfilment.

They refuse to recognize Jesus as Messiah, but in this imprecation they repudiate any possibility of Messiah coming to deliver them.

They have accepted Cæsar as their only king. Now they give themselves up to abide under the curse of God.

No charge can be raised against Jesus, except that He claims to be the Messiah for whom they have longed. He has come to fulfil their Messianic

expectations with a glory far exceeding all that they had contemplated. He has come to them in His Father's name, seeking His Father's glory. They can find no fault in Him. All that they can plead is simply their own unbelief. 'Hath any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?' (John vii. 48).

Certainly their unbelief would only be taken as giving the fuller warrant to His claim. Did not the prophet ask with anticipating wonder long ago, 'Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' (Is. liii. 1).

'We know that God spake unto Moses; but as for this Man, we know not whence He is' (John ix. 29). So they taunted the blind man who had received his sight. Themselves in their blindness failed to perceive that the word was accomplished, 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him shall ye hearken. . . . And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him' (Deut. xviii. 15, 19).

They refuse to hearken. They call out that the Blood may be required!

The warnings of Moses and of Isaiah might well have made them pause in the wilfulness of their unbelief, but those warnings were given with Divine foreknowledge of the rejection that would surely follow. The words of the Psalmist were to have their fulfilment: 'For the sin of their mouth, and for the words of their lips, they shall be taken in

their pride: and why? their preaching is of cursing and lies' (Ps. lix. 12).

It was indeed a national desperation which could make them imprecate the curse upon their children. It seems as if they said, 'We will not have this Man to reign over us. We will not own Him as the Messiah for whom we looked; but we know now that there can be no other Messiah. Therefore let the curse go on from generation to generation.'

O terrible Passover, in which the Blood of the Paschal Lamb was indeed to be sprinkled upon the lintel and the side posts of the door of the Heavenly Covenant, and yet they would not have their part in its holy shelter!

It was the door of the Heavenly Home on which this Paschal Blood was to be sprinkled. The Jews did not desire to quit the earthly for the heavenly. They did not desire to quit the Egypt of the world, going forth in the virtue of this Paschal oblation to secure the land promised to their fathers.

It was said of old that no one was to go out of the house until the morrow. The night of earthly life, hallowed by the Blood of the true Passover, was to be followed by the morning of the next life for those who were the children of the day.

The Jews did not look for the Blood of Jesus to hallow for them the grave, whereby they might be acknowledged as God's children. They called for the Blood to rest upon themselves as with an Egyptian curse. It would have sheltered them, making the grave's night to be a bright and heavenly day. It was invoked by them, and fell upon them so

as to make the day of earth to be dark with a worse darkness than the grave.

O Jesu, who didst give Thy Precious Blood to be shed for us, that we, being sheltered by its power, might have our portion in the glory of Thy life at the Right Hand of God, grant me so to abide in the truth of Thy covenant that I may experience the full blessings of Thy Redemption. Let not Thy Blood rest upon me as an alien to mark me for the curse, but in the fellowship of Thy mystical Body and the power of Thy sanctifying Spirit, that it may be within me a principle of holy life.

O My son, let My Blood be upon the door of thine house, that thou mayest do all things in its heavenly virtue. Take heed that thou be not as the world outside. My Blood protects My people, but it bears witness against the world that the world is sinful. Yea, My Blood is upon them. Consider well how thou hast been sanctified thereby, lest thou do despite unto the Spirit of grace.

O Lord Jesu, who hast elected me to have my heart sprinkled from an evil conscience by this precious Blood of the covenant, grant that I may always rejoice in its holy impulses, and act worthy of Thyself, who hast called me to the life of grace.

2. The Fulfilment.

The Jews, rejecting Christ, invoked His Blood to rest upon themselves in all its penal vengeance. So

was the measure of their iniquity made full. 'Upon that generation was to come all the blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias, who was slain between the porch and the altar' (Matt. xxiii. 35).

Yet another forty years were to elapse ere the full vengeance came; but when it did come, how sore a vengeance was it! Now they cried, 'Crucify Him!' Then should they and their children be crucified in such multitudes that, as the historian expresses it, 'wood seemed to be wanting to make crosses, and space wanting where they could be set up.'

All the denunciations of Moses uttered against them if they did not continue steadfast in God's covenant burst out upon them in answer to this imprecation. They had not been unfaithful to God's covenant by giving themselves to idolatry, as their fathers had done. They broke the covenant of their fathers by rejecting Him in whom that covenant was fulfilled. For nearly two thousand years has that curse rested upon them. Even their wealth has only aggravated their curse, making them an object of the more terrible persecution to the nations amongst whom they were scattered. They have been indeed a byword. During all these ages the imprecation of the Psalmist has rested upon those who sought, like Saul, the life of David's Representative: 'Slay them not, lest my people forget it, but scatter them abroad among the people. . . . Consume them in Thy wrath, consume them, that they may perish: and know that it is God'—even the Incarnate God—'that ruleth in Jacob, and

unto the ends of the earth' (Ps. lix. 11, 13). Yes, the curses of Ps. cix. were to be fulfilled upon the wanderer outcast for ages from the land of his fathers, 'because his mind was not to do good, but persecuted the poor helpless man'—their covenant God, who for our sakes became poor—'that he might slay Him that was vexed at the heart' (Ps. cix. 15).

Terribly, terribly has the imprecation been fulfilled; but however much the scoffer may rebel against the curses which were treasured up as a warning of Divine wrath in the sacred books of the Jews, the commentary of history cannot be set aside. The prophecy must have come from God which depicted such a future curse as has rested upon Israel alone amongst all the nations of the world. The wrath must be the wrath of God which during all these centuries has dogged the existence of that nation which, during a nearly equal period of two thousand years, God had chosen to be His own people, singling them out for special providences, whether in prosperity or in suffering, to be distinctly His amongst all the nations of the earth. The wrath of the God of their fathers has burst out upon them ever since the day when they imprecated against themselves and their children the innocent Blood of Jesus, the Messiah.

O Jesu, Thou wast indeed the Hope of Israel to whom they looked through many a generation; yet did they reject Thee. Thou shouldst have been to them a blessing, but they turned Thy blessing into a curse. O help me to look to Thee with a true devotion;

yea, to take up my cross and follow Thee. O let my heart be sound in Thy statutes, lest I in like manner be ashamed.

My son, be well assured that every word that is written in the law shall surely come to pass. My promises shall not fail, but My judgments shall be equally sure against those who despise My covenant.

O Jesu, Jesu, when Thou didst weep over Jerusalem, didst Thou not also weep, looking forward to the unfaithfulness of Thy people in Thy Church?

For these, indeed, I wept; and these also, if they repent not, must feel My wrath no less than the Jews of old. Consider how the people of the old covenant were smitten because they knew not the day of their visitation, and take heed lest the same vengeance come upon thee.

O Jesu, I was unworthy to be called into this covenant. Even now in my blindness how little do I recognize the closeness of that fellowship wherein Thou callest me to live with Thyself! 'O let my soul live, and it shall praise Thee; and Thy judgments shall help me. I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost: O seek Thy servant, for I do not forget Thy commandments' (Ps. cxix. 175, 176).

3. The Transformation in Store.

The Blood of Jesus was to be upon the people of Israel from generation to generation. While the children held to their fathers' rebellion, rejecting Jesus, that Blood would still rest upon them for

vengeance. O that living Blood, shed by violence in death, and yet not perishing in death! O that living Blood, which still claimed recognition as being perfectly pure and holy! How it rested upon the Jewish nation, while in aggravated unbelief they repudiated their own Messiah! The typical blood of Mosaic sacrifices ceased to flow. They could no longer be offered, for the Jew had no access to the Temple site. The Jew waiting outside the walls of the city had to confess that the law was indeed done away.

There was a power, nevertheless, which all the while was speaking in mysterious silence. The Blood of Jesus rested upon the nation, bidding them understand that the sacrifices of the Temple were done away because He was come who was the Antitype to which they pointed.

The Blood upon them pleaded against them as sinners. But it was also the Blood of God pleading with them that they might be penitents. If they were guilty of Messiah's death, yet they were the heirs of Messiah's covenant. While they remained in their unbelief, that Blood cried out against them for a special penalty. If they would return to Him whom their fathers had slain, that Blood marked Him as being of their very kindred after the flesh. The children of Jacob might be guilty of their brother's murder, but they were none the less Joseph's brethren.

The tie of blood binds the house of Israel to the Incarnate God of Israel. Ephraim and Manasseh were born to Joseph in Egypt, but the old family

was not cast away. Their sheaves would bow down to his sheaf. The eleven stars would do him obeisance.

So must we take the very curse which rests upon Israel for a season as being itself the instrument and pledge of a glory to be developed in Israel ere the end shall come.

The Blood of Jesus speaketh better things than that of Abel. Though it cries out against the fratricide, it cries out with the tender love of Him that sticketh closer than a brother. It cries out with a voice which death could not hush, and a love which hatred could not destroy. Still He is not ashamed to call them brethren, as the Apostle reminds the Hebrews to whom he wrote (Heb. ii. 11).

Surely, when the time shall come for the feasting of Joseph's brethren, 'the men will marvel one at another' (Gen. xliii. 33). We know not how Benjamin shall be claimed for bondage. We know not how Judah shall plead with Him whom they know not. We may, however, be assured that the coat of many colours, stained with blood, shall become effectual in the glory of the throne of Egypt. The Messianic Priesthood, of which it was the symbol, seemed to Jacob for a while to have died out under the power of a wild beast. No! Satan might mar the Body of Jesus with hellish violence, but He only passed away into a higher life. The aged Jacob had yet to come down to behold the glory of his son who seemed to be dead. In that death shall life be found. Life! What a wondrous manifestation of life! 'If the

casting of them away be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?' (Rom. xi. 15).

The house of Israel shall yet welcome the Blood of Jesus with tears of gratitude. It shall be a wondrous transformation. The garments stained with fury shall shine with love. 'I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto Me whom they have pierced: and they shall mourn for Him, as one that mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn' (Zech. xii. 10).

O Jesu, hasten the time of Thy manifestation, that Israel may turn unto Thee, and the veil may be taken away which is still upon their hearts. Thou who didst shed Thy Precious Blood for their sanctification, pour out upon them Thy Holy Spirit for their illumination. Hear our prayer for Thy people, and grant that we may share along with them the glory of Thy heavenly city.

Take heed, My son, that thou thyself misuse not the privileges of thy calling. As thou hast been called to partake of My gifts, give diligence to show forth in all things their power. I will assign to every one in My kingdom the special place which befits him. Walk in the light whilst thou hast the light, that thou mayest have thy portion with the children of the light

in the great day of the glorification of My saints.

O Lord Jesu, may Thy Precious Blood sprinkled on my heart indeed renew me to holiness. That which now I see not, teach Thou me. Illuminate the eye of my soul, that I may be ready at all times to bear whatever shall make me most conformable to Thy Holy Passion. May Thy Precious Blood rest upon me evermore with the fulness of the Father's blessing.

MEDITATION LII.

The Way of Sorrows.

And when they had mocked him, they took off from him the robe, and put on him his garments, and led him away to crucify him.—St. Matt. xxvii. 31.

And they lead him out to crucify him.—St. Mark xv. 20.

They took Jesus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself, unto the place called The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha.—St. John xix. 17.

1. The Crowd following Christ.

We must remember how vast a multitude used to be gathered together at Jerusalem at the time of the Passover. Those who had followed Jesus from one tribunal to another had gathered fresh numbers since the early hours of the morning. The presence of the chief priests and officers would add to the dignity of the proceedings. Each fresh move would waken some fresh curiosity. Numbers roused for the day and having no immediate occupation, waiting for the time when they must bring their lambs to be sacrificed, would join the throng in wonder and curiosity. The very spectacle of Jesus, who had been exhibited to them, all wounds, would fix the most careless with a strange fascination of interest. A mad sense of horror at His claims, which seemed to them to be blasphemy, would stir them with diabolical hatred. In all His sufferings the infuriated multitude would see nothing to melt them to

pity. They would behold them as the outward expression of Divine anger under which He had fallen. 'We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted' (Is. liii. 4). In many places, as they moved along, the crowd would be swelling in dimensions as others joined who had not been present at the trial. There would be a vindictive but triumphant cry at the nation having carried its point against the Roman governor, and forced him to surrender the One whom they accused of blasphemy, although he persisted in maintaining the innocence of the Prisoner. An occasional reference to His miracles mingled doubtless with their execrations, and they regarded the victory as a triumph over imposture and sorcery.

Surely it seems as if hell were let loose in all these multitudes who throng the streets of Jerusalem. 'O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be thou not united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall' (Gen. xlix. 6).

Is there none amongst this crowd to lift up a voice for Him? O my soul, art thou silent? Where are they that should bear some witness to His truth?

O my soul, why art thou here? Art thou following in idle despair or miserable curiosity? Is love dumb while hatred speaks with myriad mouths? Does nature succumb before the triumph of hell, and does not grace contemplate the sure victory of heaven? Alas, my soul! the crowd is still pressing on. Take heed that thou art following

the Crucified with a true devotion. Let not the world absorb thee into its darkness. O darkness, wherein the light of God is hidden from the heart of man! Darkness which hides not the heart of man from God, but makes it stand out in terrible antagonism to that pure light! O, if the light that is in Jerusalem be darkness, how great is that darkness!

O Lord Jesu, cleanse my heart, that I may, with vision purified from earth, behold Thee, follow Thee, cling to Thee, confess Thee, suffer for Thee!

My son, follow Me closely. Think not of the multitude, but think of Me. Lose the thought of thine own self in Me. Great as are thy sins, nevertheless thou wilt be safe if thou look to Me. Thou must trust in Me. Thou must lose all other thoughts in My love.

Yea, Lord, Thy sufferings are unspeakable. My heart cannot measure them. Yet I know that Thou art thus enduring all things out of love to me. Therefore I long to know more of Thy sufferings, that I may love Thee better. Surely Thou bearest my sins. The Cross that is laid on Thee, the wounds of Thy Body, are but a symbol of the grief of my sins as weighing down and wounding Thy holy Heart. O Lord, never could I have thought that Thou wouldst thus suffer for my sins. Never could I have known how great my sins were, did I not see them reflected thus on the pure mirror of Thy holiness, and causing Thee such unsearchable suffering in the depth of Thy mediatorial love.

Truly, My son, I alone can teach thee the way of My statutes, by teaching thee how thou hast wandered out of the way. Now, therefore, take up thy cross and follow Me.

O Lord, this is all that I, a sinner, can do. With my feet alone I cannot follow Thee, but must fall by the way beneath the pressure of the multitude on every side. While mine eyes rest upon Thee, I gain strength. My only life is in the contemplation of Thy love.

2. The Women bewailing.

Blessed were those women who followed Jesus, beating their breasts and bewailing Him! Many of them had followed Him in Galilee, and seen the miracles which He wrought. Is this the end to which all those wondrous works were leading? Strange overthrow of every human hope! Yet this weakness is truly mightier than those marvels! The weakness of woman bewails the weakness of God!

O my soul, thou must follow Jesus in thy contemplation as those women followed Him. They had seen His works; they could not doubt of His power. They see Him as it were dying before them, already half-dead by the terrible Roman scourging and manifold bloodsheddings of the last few hours. Yet is love stronger than death. The mystery of death draws out into triumphant action the mystery of love. If they loved Him in His strength, how much more in His weakness! Some of them, perhaps, ministered to Him of their goods, when in His outward need He would receive their

help. Now they can minister to Him no more. They follow Him in love. They feel their dependence upon Him. All that they could give to Him they leave behind. All that they have is useless now, for they cannot give it to Him. They look to Him. Feeble, bleeding, helpless, hated, scorned, He stands before them. Love becomes multiplied by every wound they see. Each wound in its weakness is a mouthpiece of Divine sovereignty in its power. It cannot be otherwise, for God is love; and each wound which mars this outward frame, so near to death, is a manifestation of God, in His activity of calm endurance, responding to man's mad rebelliousness through the passive sensibilities of the tender flesh which they assailed. God's silence spake with all the eloquence of love, and love could not be deaf to such a call.

Those women heeded not the cry of the hateful world around. They loved. They were absorbed in love. That love is not worthy of the name which draws back because of any surroundings. The heart which loves and the heart of the loved one may be separated in space, but are absorbed in the unity of love.

O my soul, dost thou love Jesus?

Can anything which the world has to say affect thee? Canst thou hear the outcry of the multitude? O, the silence of thy Redeemer's love must be to thee an utterance of power which hushes all the shouts of a wild world! I love not truly if that silence thrills me not. I cannot feel that silence if the world's wild shouts can shake me.

What though hell be let loose in those shouts! Can death or hell separate me from the love of God my Redeemer? While I follow Jesus, I feel that hell is let loose in the world. But He that calls me to follow Him, calls me out of the world that I may live with His life. Yea, the powers of hell round about me must only make me experience the more intensely the all-sufficing strength of His imperishable love. Until love die in Him it must not die in me. Having loved His own, He loves them to the end; and He would bind me in His love to live eternally.

O Jesu, my God, my Redeemer! My Hope and Strength amidst all the troubles of life! My Reward, my Joy, in the glory of eternity! Draw me after Thyself by the power of Thy Holy Spirit. Let Thy Divine love rule my heart. I long to live for Thee, yea, to die for Thee. I would follow Thee and die with Thee, that in the darkness of death I may see more truly the light of Thy love.

My son, if thou lovest Me truly, thou wilt surely follow Me. In every act I go before thee, setting the example of love, moving with the power of love; and in every act thou must follow Me, doing the work of love in the spirit of love. Great peace they have, and they alone in the world, who are separated from the world around them by their love to Me.

O Lord, so let me follow Thee. Thy strength is made perfect in weakness. Let me in my weakness

find Thy strength and lose my weakness; yea, lose myself and find Thee.

3. The Soldiers' Procession.

It was meet that soldiers should accompany a King going forth to victory. The centurion preceded; also a soldier bearing the title which was eventually to be affixed to the Cross. There may have been a double fear on the part of the authorities, so that the band of soldiers was undoubtedly a strong one. Pilate might fear lest there should be an outburst of feeling on the side of the people to rescue Jesus, which indeed he had striven to arouse, but which would be fatal if he could not command it. He might also fear lest the insult offered to the nation by the title which he had written for his accusation might arouse a rebellious spirit, as he knew it had already galled the chief priests. The military procession was a triumphal proclamation of Roman power over the last hopes of the Jewish nation. Pilate may also have feared that this mysterious Prisoner might in the last moment give some supernatural indication of the power which all along had made him marvel. The apprehension must still have haunted him, for he could not wash his conscience clear of the Blood so unjustly shed. We may therefore think of a large force in attendance, while there were four soldiers specially charged with the details of crucifixion. Behind Jesus there came also the two thieves, each bearing his own cross, and four soldiers in attendance upon each of them also.

Not improbably there may have been a political element in the conduct of these two thieves. Pilate, as he gave orders for their crucifixion, may have felt a terrible consciousness that while he was condemning them as instigators of rebellion and robbery, he was also condemning the true King of the Jews, the last Hope of Israel. He may have said to himself, 'It is His own fault: if that Man would not speak to me, He must take the consequences.' Yet, as he heard the tramp of the soldiers leaving the Prætorium, he must have felt that there was a power wakened against him by the death of that just Man which could not be hushed by any insolent treatment of the Jewish nation. He might send his soldiers to insult them by crucifying Jesus as their King, but the Man whom he had exhibited to the Jews stood before his mind as a power that could not be gainsaid. As he went to his wife he might say, 'I have washed my hands of that strange Prophet's blood;' but the drops of that Blood stained everything that he touched. He might try to think all was hushed by the rude merriment of the soldiery, as they led the captive King of the Jews to His end; but he felt that that end was only the beginning of a new dispensation. There was a new kingdom, the kingdom of the truth, ready to spring into existence from that Cross. The meek Prisoner stood not on His claims; but the heart of Pilate felt the whole atmosphere ready to crush him with the thunders of a retribution that he could no longer hold back.

O what a brooding vengeance is ready to darken

Jerusalem! O silence of Jesus! How wilt thou echo back from the heavenly height with all the terror of articulate denunciation from the judgment-seat of the Incarnate Word! O meekness of Jesus! How shall they who heeded Thee not feel the loosing of Thy power in the wrath of the Lamb!

O Jesu, let me be one of Thine own soldiers, following Thee that I may be crucified with Thee! The penitent thief was a sinner, even as I! O that I might bear witness to Thee even as he!

Yea, My son. Follow Me and bear witness to Me. Follow Me in this time of silence, and I will bear witness to thee in the day of utterance. Fear not what the world can do. In its utmost fury it can only bind thee more closely to Me. Only by degrees canst thou learn what it is to follow Me; but thou shalt learn by degrees who I am whom thou art following. In the sweet fellowship of My Spirit thou shalt learn the glory of a Divine light issuing from My Presence to cheer each struggling soul in the valley of death.

O Lord God, indeed it is so! Thy lips speak not as we go along the way of sorrows, but Thy Blood speaks. I see the soldiers in their brutality urge Thee onward with the lash; but as each drop of Blood falls to the ground, I see it shining out as with a heaven of infinite glory and delight. To gaze upon the brightness of those drops of Blood as I follow in Thy steps, fills my whole being with an infinite energy. I am, indeed, transported out of myself. The very sight inebriates

me with a joyous rapture of heavenly consciousness in which all thoughts of earth are lost. O blessed transport, wherein I lose myself that I may find Thee! I know that none can see the mystery of Thy Precious Blood, shining with the lustre of Godhead, unless they share Thy sufferings. O well might saints welcome Thy sufferings wherein Thou hast permitted them to follow Thee! Woe is me that my dull heart does not respond more fully to so wondrous an appeal!

O My son, the soldiers wound Me ignorantly as they urge Me on; but thy sins wound Me more. Be not as the soldiers, who know not what they are doing. Follow Me. Fear not the world's reproaches. If the world wounds thee, thou shalt find that the drops of My Blood change earth's rough road into a heavenly pavement effulgent with Divine love. The way of sorrows is the way of illumination to all who follow Me with attentive hearts.

O Lord Jesu, so let me follow Thee. Too often have I thought of Thy Passion as a mystery above imagination, and as a history of time long past. But be it not so! O let me know it as a reality of Divine grace, that I may live in its power while I follow Thee. Let me know it as a fact to be perpetuated in the daily life of Thy saints, so that I may rejoice in the revelation of Thy love while I share Thy suffering. The sufferings which Thou bearest shall make me great if I suffer along with Thee. O let me not despise any suffering, nor shrink from it. Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes, the highway of Thy holy Cross, the path that leadeth to the Mount of Vision.

MEDITATION LIII.

Simon the Cyrenian.

And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to go *with them*, that he might bear his cross.—St. Matt. xxvii. 32.

And they compel one passing by, Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to go *with them*, that he might bear his cross.—St. Mark xv. 21.

And when they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, and laid on him the cross, to bear it after Jesus.—St. Luke xxiii. 26.

1. The Suddenness of the Call.

We have no reason to suppose that Simon the Cyrenian had been previously a follower of Jesus. Nor, again, is there any justification for the idea that he was regarded as a Sabbath-breaker coming in from the country. Even if his country home were further from Jerusalem than we are warranted in imagining, yet travelling was not an offence on a Feast-Sabbath, although it was forbidden on the weekly Sabbath, even if this Friday were a Sabbath. It does not seem likely that he was coming in from work in the country at this early hour of the morning. In all probability he may have been sleeping in the country, not having found accommodation within the walls because of the crowd. He belonged to the large colony of Jews at Cyrene, many of whom are specially mentioned as being present on the following Day of Pentecost.

Probably he was coming in to join in the Paschal sacrifice. How little did he know how he would be privileged to take a prominent part in that greater sacrifice by which the ancient Passover should be fulfilled and superseded!

Soldiers frequently impressed casual persons whom they met for various works. Not improbably Simon may have shown some pity, perhaps even some regard, for the great Prophet whom they were leading out to be crucified. We may feel sure that whether or no there was any outward sign of compassion, there was a readiness of heart which God, whose providence ordereth all things, could read, and as He read the heart, so He blessed it.

His name, Simon, signifies 'hearing,' given to the Patriarch because God heard his mother's prayer; having also another meaning, as implying the docility of him to whom the name belonged, as being ready to hear and obey. St. Athanasius says that the word Cyrenian means 'ready.' This man was indeed a ready hearer, taking up the Cross to follow the Word of God.

This stranger, a Hellenist from a distant colony among the heathen, found himself suddenly coming not only to the Old Jerusalem, but to the New, the Heavenly City. Where was the other Simon who had been with Christ so long, and received such marked favour in time past—the self-confident Rock-man? More ready to promise than to hear, he is now in this hour of difficulty lost to sight. How true was the warning give to him, 'Many that are first shall be last, and the last first!'

O Jesu, give me a ready mind that I may always be prepared to perform Thy will. I know not what Thy call may be at any moment, but at every moment let me live in the expectation of Thy call. I know not in what form Thou wilt meet me. In every form wherein Thou comest forth give me grace to acknowledge Thee. I come from a far-distant land, but Thou wilt not reject me. Thou comest forth from the City of God, bearing the burden of man's sin. No sacrifice in the earthly Jerusalem could take my sins away; but Thou comest from the earthly sanctuary in the fulness of heavenly power. All the ordinances of the old law find their fulfilment in Thee. Help me to surrender myself to Thy service, even though there be none else to follow Thee. No suddenness, no solitude, no shame, should keep back the heart which Thou callest near in holy love. The outward accidents of life compel me, but my heart is ready to serve Thee. Where Thou goest, there let me find my true joy. Where Thou goest before, why should I fear to follow?

O My son, thou art Mine, though thou comest from a distant land. Thou comest up to worship, and I will lead thee to a better worship than Israel knew of old. I am going forth outside the gate of Jerusalem to consecrate a new Temple. Follow Me, therefore, beyond the camp. Take up thy cross and suffer My reproach. It shall turn to thy glory if thou fearest not. Thou shalt see the lintel and the side-posts of the door marked with My Blood. Thou shalt dwell under the safeguard of My death, par-

taker of Mine eternal life in the Father's Home. So shall no evil touch thee.

O Lord God, blessed be Thy great and glorious Name. How is it that I see Thee falling under Thy Cross, whereas Thou dost assure me of strength to carry mine? O let me bear Thy Cross for Thee, and along with Thee. I know that Thou wilt give me strength.

Yes, My son, I fall under My Cross in the weakness of the flesh, that I may strengthen thee to carry it in the power of the Spirit. Did I not fall, thou couldst not stand. Now must thou share My weakness, that I may bring thee to share My power.

O Jesu, my Lord God, O Jesu, Lamb of God, my whole reliance is upon Thee. Thy weakness is stronger than men. While I bear the Cross which rests upon Thy shoulders, I feel a virtue coming to me thereby. Thou goest before and givest strength. Yea, in every act whereby Thou callest me to serve Thee and to suffer with Thee, Thou art ministering to my necessity and preparing me to experience Thy glory.

2. Carrying the Cross after Jesus.

Jesus had probably fallen down beneath the weight of His Cross. He who by His Divine power sustains all the world, was carrying His Cross in the weakness of His outward Flesh. Had He not done so, the suffering would have been in appearance only, and it would have had no merit in the Eyes of God. The Incarnation, with all its incidents of

suffering, was intended to exhibit the perfect love of the only begotten Son, accomplishing all that the creature could do, so that nothing might be wanting to the perfect obedience of love. Had Jesus not fallen under the Cross, it would seem that there was some strength of human nature still unused whereby He might have borne some heavier burden. It was not so to be. He bore His burden by superhuman power; but that power was to strengthen Him for moral exercise, not for the destruction of human effort.

Had Jesus carried His Cross by a simple act of Divine omnipotence, His Passion would have left us no example for our own encouragement. He suffered in our weakness, but He acted in the power of God; and that power will be vouchsafed to us in our weakness according to the faithfulness wherewith we follow Him. We are not to think that the power is wanting because human nature fails. The measure of our Lord's subjection to the power of Satan was according to the charge, 'Thou shalt not touch His life' (Job ii. 6). So is it with us. If we will be true to bear all, however much we may fall down crushed, there is a Divine power of life enabling us to rally from the fall.

And is there for us no Simon at hand? Truly the sympathy of human aid is what we must always be ready both to give and to receive. Jesus in His love provides for us manifold encouragements to sustain us, both in natural forms and in the fellowship of His saints. Yet far beyond this is the blessedness of that personal strength which He

Himself will give. He is Simon, the Hearkener. When we sink in our weakness, He hears our prayer. Personally He comes to each one of us as members of His mystical Body. By the personal agency of His Holy Spirit He helps us to carry our cross.

We are not to think that Simon took the Cross instead of Jesus. He came behind Jesus, helping to carry it, so that it might not drag upon the ground. After all, it was but a light portion of it that the follower had to carry. In truth, the weight of it was rather increased upon the shoulders of Jesus than diminished.

Not otherwise is it with us while we fill up what remaineth of His sufferings. We diminish not that which He had to bear. Rather by the very iniquity even of our holy things we make the burden which He carries greater. Our very sympathy is so unworthy of Him, that it aggravates rather than relieves. O how is it that He who sunk under His Cross while He bore it alone, sinks not now, though Simon's help makes it heavier on His shoulders? There is a power which the fellowship of Simon occasions. Simon can bring nothing, but Jesus develops in Himself a greater power of inherent Godhead by the love which He gives to Simon. Jesus in His individual suffering may sink to the earth in human weakness. But Jesus in His mediatorial capacity has within Himself a treasury of strength, enabling Him to act for the support of every one that follows Him bearing the Cross. It is but the foot of the Cross which touches earth which we can carry. Jesus carries on His shoulders the full

burden of our sins, which all the power of Heaven would be unable to bear for us!

O Jesu, Thy love shall sustain me if I follow Thee, bearing Thy Cross. O how sweet it is to know that Thou dost love me with a love so human, so personal, so Divine! O blessed weakness, whereby Thou dost feel my necessity! O blessed strength, whereby Thou dost enable me to do all that Thou requirest!

My son, thou canst not tell the burden that I bear for thee. Bear what I give thee, and thou shalt find My grace coming forth to thee beyond all that thou canst perceive. Truly, while thou bearest My Cross I will teach thee the sweetness of My love, wherewith I am bearing the bitterness of thy sin. Remember that these must ever be proportionate, the one to the other. There is no sweetness of Divine consolation which can come to thee which is not the reward of that suffering which I have borne for thee.

O my Lord, how can I shrink from any suffering which Thou dost put upon me, when I consider that it is the bond of union between me and Thee, whereby I may experience the living power of Thy love! O let all my murmuring be changed into adoration and gratitude, when I think how Thou hast suffered on my behalf! The suffering is the penalty of my sin, and yet it is not worthy to be named with my sin. Infinitely greater is my sin, but Thy love is still triumphant. O my Jesus, every suffering ought indeed

to bring to me some fresh consciousness of Thy sweetness. Thy goodness, which is the measure of my sin, must be the measure of my penitence, my gratitude, my worship, my obedience, my love. O let my love grow to the fulness of Thine by the power of Thine inspiration. Yea! I will praise Thee for any participation of Thy Cross whereby I may learn more and more of the fulness of Thy love to me.

3. Alone with Christ.

While such vast multitudes were thronging on every side, how must Simon the Cyrenian have felt the solitariness of his own position! Who can tell if his heart in any sense became alive to its dignity? Outwardly all was shame.

The soldiers mocked him by making him an attendant of Him whom they were mocking all along as King of the Jews. They knew not the real dignity of that King, nor the honour which would accrue to Simon throughout eternity as a result of that close fellowship.

Probably Simon himself had little idea of the real issue of that day's march, even if he had some intuition of the Divine mission of Jesus.

Alone with Jesus in the midst of a mocking world! So suddenly alone! A heart shaken to its depths by witnessing the suffering of Jesus, and perhaps on that very account impressed into this attendance upon Him! The world reviling him so contemptuously! Perhaps having to share with Jesus not only the weight of the Cross, but also

occasionally a stroke of the whip wherewith they sought to drive Him on! Amidst all those thousands of people not one like himself!

How he must have wondered with himself why he was called to this!

O Jesu, why hast Thou called me thus out of the world? How many might have been found of stouter heart to bear witness to Thee in the presence of the world! O let me consider well that Thy reproach is greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. Those whom Thou callest to any great reward, Thou callest to serve Thee in solitude; for surely we cannot serve Thee at all unless we serve Thee alone. Thou wilt not accept any service which is given Thee by any because others do the like. To serve Thee according to the measure of the world, is to serve the world, not Thee.

Come, then, My son, and follow Me. Ask not why I have called thee when there were so many that seemed more fitting to be called. Only remember that I have called thee, and thou must act worthy of the call.

Indeed, most loving Lord, I am amazed when I think of Thy goodness in calling me, my unworthiness, my weakness, my unsteadfastness to Thy call! Often in my negligence I seem to let Thy Cross fall to the ground. Yet Thou art carrying its full weight for me, and I am only permitted to share it that I may share Thy grace.

Learn, My son, the greatness of this grace.

I am alone with thee. O, if others saw thee as I see thee, who is there, thinkest thou, that would bear with thee? I know all thy sinfulness, and yet I am content to take thee as the companion of My Passion. Thou art alone with Me. Who would not give all that he possessed for such a privilege, if he only knew who I am, the Lord of life and glory?

Thy love, O Lord, surpasses all knowledge. O pardon me for being so negligent of Thee and so solicitous about the world, so heedful of the world's blame and so unmoved by Thy Divine bounty. If I had all the world along with Thee, all would be nothing; and if I am separated from all the world whilst following Thee, I am only separated from nothingness that I may learn the substantial glory of Thy truth.

Shrink not, My son, from the suffering which thou hast to bear for a little while in the world. Thou seemest to be alone; but if thou art with Me, all the host of heaven are rejoicing over thee. Thou art My sheep that was lost, and I rejoice to draw thee out of the world by the fellowship of My Passion. Thou must follow Me in loneliness. Yet think of the multitude of the heavenly host who are giving Me praise on thy behalf. The day shall come when thou shalt behold My glory. Then, if thou art found faithful, I will confess thee before My Father, and before all the holy angels. Great shall be the joy of that day

when it comes. Press onward now in joy. Rejoice to share My suffering, that thou mayest share My joy.

O Lord Jesu, well mightest Thou cast me altogether away. And yet Thou dost encourage me with promises beyond all expectation instead of denouncing me as my misery deserves. O Lord, none loves like Thee. Yea, there is no love but what comes from Thee. O then fill my heart with Thy love, that so I may abide in Thy love. O let me love none but Thee. Let me love all in Thee. Let me know no love but what comes from Thee. In all Thy dealings towards me, make me to welcome in love the love which Thou givest, that I may know in the end the Love which Thou art.

MEDITATION LIV.

Jesus addressing the Women.

And there followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?—St. Luke xxiii. 27–31.

1. The Deprecation of merely Human Sympathy.

In all probability the meeting with Simon, and the arrangements for him to follow Jesus and carry the Cross, may have occasioned a halt, so that our Lord had the opportunity of addressing the wailing women. It does not seem that these were a band of disciples, although many may have witnessed and benefited by His miracles. The wail was the utterance of tender sympathy at a spectacle of surpassing sorrow. Its record serves to recall to our sense the outward features of woe, which should have appealed to every heart in all that multitude. We might otherwise forget them in the intense darkness of spiritual anguish wherein reverent imagination shrouds the figure of our Lord through all this transaction, absorbing His bodily sufferings in the terrors of so Divine a mystery—the darkness of spiritual blindness which seems to make that vast multitude incapable

of any tender thought. Yes! He is there in all our weakness and pain. His Body throbs with all the reality of nervous distress; the more intense because in the calmness of inalienable Godhead He does not die away from its acute perception, but retains an individualizing sensitiveness in every sore which must long ago have made life forsake Him had He only lived with the life of man. The women weep and smite their breasts. Fain would I join in their lamentation! Nineteen centuries avail not to make that scene a mere thing of the past. That march to Calvary anticipates the march of ages. He bears our griefs and carries our sorrows. He bears our sins. Could that suffering die from the consciousness of man while the world lasts, there could be no penitence. Could that suffering die from the consciousness of God, there could be no pardon.

O my soul, while the world from age to age is hounding Jesus on to death, fall thou down upon the ground and hear His words as He speaks to the wailing women!

It is the last speech which thy Saviour makes ere He leaves the world. Afterwards His words will only be brief and unconnected. Now He pauses in the midst of His march to give thee instruction how thou art to regard His Passion.

Surely there must have been a wonderful display of supernatural dignity and power which clothed His outward form as He gathered Himself up to speak in this manner. See Him fallen under the weight of the Cross! See the Cyrenian struck with a strange spasm of sympathy, and seized by the

soldiers that he may help their prostrate Victim through the remaining steps of their progress!

Calmly the helpless One rises to His feet, and, at the sight, we can imagine how all that military force drew back amazed, subdued, and motionless in expectation. The multitude are hushed. The women's cries alone break on the ear.

But hark! He speaks.

It is not the voice of one that pleads for help. In gentle sovereignty His Voice rings through the multitude around, so as to reach the distant group whose tender lamentations call forth a response of grateful acknowledgment.

'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me!'

It is in no churlish spirit that He represses their affection. He would direct it to a higher purpose than the transitory sensation of this crisis. His sufferings are not for Himself, and those who would know His sufferings must sympathize, not merely with the outward appearance, but with the inward cause.

He who stands before them is the Ever-Blessed One, abiding in the glory of the Father. The sufferings of His humanity are the consequences of man's sin. That sin-stricken nature He would gather back to the Divine holiness and joy. He comes to make peace by the Blood of His Cross. For Him we must not weep. He falls to the earth, but He is not drowned in the wild ocean of our sorrows. He is our Life and Peace. We must bow down in worship before His calmness, His strength. The triumph of His glorious Person is unimpaired amidst all the

fury of diabolical outrages. It exhales a mysterious energy of love for the support of all His people in their need. The only answer which our loving hearts can give is to rise with adoring gratitude to the embrace of His restoring power.

O my Jesu, while I behold Thee bowed down under the burden of Thine infinite sorrow, the feeble sympathy of my small heart can give Thee no alleviation. It is, indeed, my own sins which have brought upon Thee this distress. All I can do is to cast myself, with all the burden of my sins, into the abyss of Thy love. That love which took our sorrows alone can heal them. As Thy mighty love purges away my sin, joy fills Thy Heart and sorrow disappears, for Thou makest Thy righteousness manifest within me.

Yea, My son, weep not for Me, but weep with Me. For thee I have wept, that for Me thou mayest rejoice. I lay down My life, but I lose it not. I will take it again. I give thee My life that thou mayest lose thy sins. My joy shall be fulfilled in thee while I make thee to find My glory, and live in its truth.

O Jesu, make me to die with Thy death, bewailing my sins, that I may live with Thy life, rejoicing in Thy holiness.

2. Coming Vengeance for Sin.

'Weep for yourselves, and for your children.'

The Jewish nation has invoked the Blood of Jesus to be upon themselves and upon their children.

That curse will assuredly be fulfilled. It is they who have brought upon themselves the innocent Blood. It must be abundantly avenged.

'Some thirty years later, and on that very spot, was judgment pronounced against some of the best in Jerusalem; and among the 3600 victims of the governor's fury, of whom not a few were scourged and crucified right over against the Prætorium, were many of the noblest of the citizens of Jerusalem. A few years more, and hundreds of crosses bore Jewish mangled bodies within sight of Jerusalem' (Edersheim, *Life of Jesus*, ii. 576).

Then 'blessed indeed would be the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck!'

In all the suffering, Jesus looks away from Himself. In His own suffering He contemplates the joy that is set before Him. He looks forward to the glory which, on the third day, He will begin to experience in that flesh which is now so grievously wounded. He looks forward also to the future of those multitudes who follow Him now with bitter hate. Already He is suffering more because He contemplates what awaits them, than by anything that they can do to Him. He is now bearing the burden of that sin which, through their hardness and impenitence of heart, will recoil back upon them from Himself, and will well merit lamentation because it can then find no cessation, no alleviation.

'Your children.' It is not only the next generation to which Jesus refers. As the innocent Blood had been imprecated upon an indefinite posterity,

so the words of Jesus bid the women bewail a future to which no limit is attached. Not only the terrible doom of Jerusalem, when the forty years of remaining probation should be outrun, but all the subsequent ages of suffering which awaited the nation in its wanderings of exile, are present to the mind of Jesus. He surveys the multitude around Him, and He beholds in them all the generations that shall be born as heirs of the curse. He wept over Jerusalem when He entered royally upon His Passion. Now He calls upon Jerusalem to weep for herself. There is nothing more that He can do for His Vine. He has shed His Blood. In these, His last sad words, He calls Jerusalem in penitence to bewail the doom which in blindness it has invoked.

But, O my soul, thou must not think only of the punishment awaiting Jerusalem. Hope rather that now the end of that punishment is near, and that the time is coming when the whole nation collectively shall indeed 'look unto Him whom they have pierced, and mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son' (Zech. xi. 10).

There is yet a mourning—the judgment of the Great Day. All tribes of the earth shall mourn when they shall see the Son of man coming with the clouds of heaven in power and great glory (Matt. xxiv. 30).

O day when it shall be seen whether I have chosen Jesus or the world! Blessed shall the barren womb then be,—the soul that has brought forth no fruit for the world, that has no earthly longings to bind it to a world that is perishing. Woe to that

soul which has some worldly object to which it still would turn. The soul that looks to earth must feel the blast which struck Lot's wife. Happy the soul that waits for Jesus, trusting in Him! 'Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear: break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child' (Is. liv. 1).

O Jesu, indeed I must weep for all that comes from my fallen nature. Whatever I do is tainted with sin! For all Thou sufferest, and I would desire to bewail all, while I see how Thou sufferest even for those things for which I am tempted to rejoice.

My son, thou must look wholly to Me. Thou canst have no fruit in those things which belong to the world of shame; and if thou seemest to thyself to have, then thou art deceiving thyself. That wherein thou exultest must bring thee confusion. Thy whole life is from Me and in Me, and all that thou doest is My doing if it have life at all. So only canst thou have fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. Nothing of nature can survive the fire of that great judgment. Learn now thy barrenness; so only canst thou then be safe.

O Lord Jesu, I am barren without Thee, but in Thy power let me bring forth fruit unto God. All that is mine, I would indeed say, Away with it! Let my dead nature spring into fruitfulness and joy by the grace of Thy Passion. Of the flesh I can but reap corruption. Let Thy Holy Spirit make my very

corruption germinate with fruit—not mine, but Thine —that in the Great Day I may rejoice in that which Thou hast done.

3. The Green Tree and the Dry.

Our Lord looks to the end of the world, when men 'shall begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.' The Lamb of God, being led forth to His crucifixion, winds up all His teachings with a warning of that Great Day to which these words ultimately belong. The beloved disciple expands them. 'They said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?' (Rev. vi. 16, 17.)

By the Incarnation, the green tree began to flourish from the root of Jesse, but all the forest round about was dead. Not only the Jewish nation, but all mankind, were dead. The pile must be made high in the last great day. Not a branch of the dead forest shall be wanting. All must be burnt up.

'They do these things in the green tree. Ye see what men do to Me.' Such seems to be our Lord's meaning. The phrase is much more than a mere impersonal expression. According to their works it shall be done to them. They do these things, but the terrors of that day shall be the work of a mightier power than theirs. 'What shall be done in the dry?' Then shall God's wrath come

forth upon them. 'For Tophet is ordained of old yea, for the king it is prepared; He hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it' (Is. xxx. 33).

That which shall then be done to men is the outcome of that which they now are doing to Christ. The fire of God's wrath is not a mere external vengeance upon the ungodly, but is the real outcome of their own actions. 'Fire comes out of the bramble' of men's sinful choice 'and devours the cedar of Lebanon' (Judg. ix. 15). No high predestination which God's favour may have bestowed will stay the consuming fire of His wrath. How slow are mankind to believe that the brambles of earth have the fire of God treasured up within them, and ready to burst forth! But so it shall be seen. As the friction of the dry wood generates the flame, so in the great day shall the ungodly shudder themselves as it were into a blaze, and the Divine Presence within them, which should have been their life, shall consume them with an utter destruction.

How solemn is this final warning which comes to us from the very midst of our Lord's Passion, to bid us remember that He will return in judgment! How untrue to Christ are those who treat the solemn denunciations of the Psalms as if they were inconsistent with the tender spirit of the Gospel! Here we have the denunciation of woes in which all the terrors of His Passion shall find themselves multiplied in the hosts of the ungodly, bursting forth as the very climax of His tender love in His last

speech as He falls beneath His Cross on His way to Calvary.

O Jesu, let me ever be careful in all that I do to Thee, and in all things let me remember that it is to Thee all things are done, whether I intend it or no. Let Thine anointing make me as a fresh green olive tree in Thy house, lest that anointing, as it dries up within me, become within me a principle of fire in the Great Day, to burn unquenchably.

My son, from Me shall thy fruit be found, if thou livest in the power of that anointing Spirit whereby I have regenerated thee. Not of earth, but of heaven, is thy fruitfulness. Not by the laws of earth, but of heaven, must thou be judged. Be active to bear fruit according to the power which thou hast received as one of My members. 'Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, My Father taketh away.' Fear not the fire which man's wrath may kindle; but fear the outburst of fire which sacrilegious earthliness of heart, and unused gifts of grace, and negligence as to thy high vocation, and forgetfulness of My sacred Passion, shall awaken from the inmost recesses of thine own spiritual being.

O Jesu, my Lord, what has the world done to Thee in the day of Thine humiliation, and how wilt Thou judge the world in the day of Thy wrath? What hast Thou done for me in this day of redemption, and what am I doing for Thee in this day of

Thy grace? O Jesu, I must weep before Thee in much self-abasement, for I have sinned against greater grace of illumination and renewal than was given to the Jews. If I act thus towards Thee in the covenant of Thy love, how will Thy gifts of grace rise up against me in the manifestation of Thy justice! Teach me to weep for myself as a miserable sinner, and for all that I do, as being unworthy to abide in that day. O Thou who hast shown me my sins in the bleeding robe of Thy suffering flesh, hide me in Thy wounds, that I may behold Thy glory, being conformed to the sweet sanctity of Thine adorable Heart. O when Thy wrath is kindled, blessed are all they that put their trust in Thee.

MEDITATION LV.

Arrival at Calvary.

And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, The place of a skull, they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted it, he would not drink.—St. Matt. xxvii. 33, 34.

And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. And they offered him wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.—St. Mark xv. 22, 23.

And when they came unto the place which is called The skull, there they crucified him.—St. Luke xxiii. 33.

1. The Place of a Skull.

The legend that this was the place where Adam was buried has no foundation in fact. Nevertheless, it is beautiful as a symbolic explanation of the word. Death, which Adam left as an inheritance to mankind, is done away by the death of the Redeemer.

If we would follow Jesus so as to partake of the benefits of His Incarnation, we must look to Him to undo all that Adam by his sin has brought about. It is not merely some consequences of Adam's sin that Christ has done away, but the whole penalty of death. The penalty which Adam left behind could not be done away by any effort or sacrifice short of the death of Christ.

Thus hath Jesus delivered us as only Jesus can. By His one oblation of Himself on Calvary, He hath made a perfect sacrifice, propitiation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. All died in Adam, but they shall escape who come to Jesus that they

may have life (John v. 40). All receive the gift of life in Christ, but they must remain under the penalty of their natural birth who come not to Him that they may receive it (John iii. 18).

Think of Calvary as the place not of one skull only, but of many skulls, since all mankind die in Adam. As we come with Jesus to Calvary, we come as sinners. The death to which He submits is a death which we cannot escape from. Yet our death is hopeless. His death is a victory. On this side of death how does His suffering surpass all that we can suffer! On the other side of death, how does His glory surpass everything that we could naturally claim! Yet as we come with Him to Calvary, how He leads us by fellowship in our suffering to behold His glory, and to partake of all that is His, as He has partaken of all that is ours!

But perhaps the name of the elevation merely refers to its outward form. O how the accidents of life bear witness to its tremendous realities! Earth is but a framework of man's eternity. The skull-shaped hill tells of the Incarnate Wisdom that should mark it for evermore.

O Jesu, the skull tells of the emptiness of all wherein I can pride myself. How soon shall all the wisdom of the world be gone! The thoughts wherein I find pleasure in the world will have passed away. The eye, the ear, the lips, the tongue, will soon be mine no more, however much I may delight in objects which the world presents to me. The world is lifeless. Its life is only death. Death shall outlive it. Yea,

and it is a better life to be dead to all outward things, no more to have any correspondence with them.

My son, death reigns on all things here, for all are under sin. See that thou art so living in the fellowship of Mine eternal wisdom that thou mayest contemplate the glory of the better world of everlasting life when thou art taken hence. Leave here the spoils of nature. Live in Me. The nature which thou leavest behind, thou shalt assume again in a better form, if thou, while continuing in the world, wilt seek thy joy in Me. Seek to have thy senses exercised for the contemplation of heavenly things, and thy natural senses mortified by a continual restraint from the passing pleasures that are here. Welcome death which shows earth's emptiness. Seek the life which death unveils. So shalt thou again take up that bodily frame from which thou art separated by death, and, living in the glory of My risen body, thou shalt see God with the eyes of a better flesh, purified, glorified, perfect in holiness, ever to rejoice in the vision of God.

O my Jesu, how wilt Thou lead me thus onward? When I behold Thy Face in righteousness I shall be satisfied with it. At Thy Right Hand are pleasures for evermore.

2. The Vinegar mingled with Gall.

Such a narcotic seems to have been provided by charitable persons to soothe the last hours of criminals

condemned to the cross. By gall we may understand some bitter substance like quassia or myrrh, as the word is used in the Septuagint. The vinegar was probably the weak wine which the soldiers drank.

They offered it to Jesus, but He would not drink. In the power of Godhead He ever rose superior to physical pain, however terribly His human Body might sink in natural feebleness; but He would not have His senses made dull by artificial power, so as to evade the suffering which He came to bear. No suffering could take away His life, for He had life in Himself. He came to bear the utmost human suffering, not to flinch from it. Surely He leaves us an example not to shrink from any pain merely with the intention of alleviation. We have to consider at various occasions wherein our case resembles His, and wherein we differ from Him. Relief which may prolong life may be sought by us. This He did not reject. Relief for the sake of merely transitory ease ought rather to be avoided if we feel that the pain is what the Father has put upon us, so that we may glorify God in bearing it. The example of Jesus seems to rouse us to a thankful courage when we have to bear up under any bodily suffering. It does not necessitate our imitation, although it ought to stimulate our courage. Life we must cherish because we are God's creatures. Pain which does not hinder the retention of life we may thankfully accept in humble penitence because we are sinners. Surely we must seek to serve God with an intellect as far as possible unclouded. We follow the example

of Christ most truly by taking such measures as will best strengthen us to endure the pain and enable us the most devoutly to lift up our hearts to Him. Not pain alone endured in obstinacy, but pain offered to God with a calm and willing heart, is that which will best conform us to Christ's Passion.

O Lord Jesu, Thou camest into the world to suffer. I was not created for suffering, but, as a sinner, I am now born to it. Never let me shrink from that which Thou hast hallowed by Thy fellowship, but welcome by Thy grace that discipline which by Thy holy example Thou hast commended.

My son, seek not the alleviations of the world in thy suffering, but look for My grace to strengthen thee. I know thy weakness, and I have provided gifts of relief which may enable thee to endure. These must thou accept with thankfulness; but look rather for My grace to be thy strength, that so thou mayest rise superior to their necessity.

O Lord, I am sure that there is nothing so good for me upon earth as the suffering, whether of mind or body, which I can share with Thee. Alas! by many a repeated sin I have enfeebled and marred the nature which Thou hast given me. Now, therefore, let me mortify that nature more and more by suffering, that the strength of Thy Divine grace may be manifest within me.

Thou shalt find in suffering the power of My grace. While all is easy, thou art prone

to forget Me, and dost often think that thou art serving Me when thou art only pleasing thyself. Suffering is the true test of all acceptable service. Thou must serve Me with that which costs thee something.

Lord Jesu, how much did my salvation cost Thee! Shall I not praise Thee for every act, however trifling, whereby I may be united with Thee? Let every pain, and every increase of every pain, make me the more sensible of what Thou hast endured. Where shall I learn the mystery of Thy Passion if I learn it not in the school of suffering? Only as by Thy Holy Spirit Thou didst offer Thyself without spot to God, made perfect as our Redeemer by the infinite sufferings of a loving obedience, so by the same Spirit strengthen me in those ways wherein my loving obedience may be perfected, that my infirmity may be lost in the glory of Thine infinity.

3. Jesus stripped of His Clothing.

Jesus would not drink of the stupefying cup which was offered to Him. Now the actual work of crucifixion must begin. Already He has been stripped of His own clothing in order to be scourged; then clothed in the mockery of the scarlet cloak. The cloak has been taken off and His own clothes were put upon Him that He might be led out to crucifixion. Now He must be stripped again.

O to what indignation was Jesus exposed! How great was the suffering each time that the wounds of His Body were freshly opened; and His Body now

was one mass of wounds, by the tearing off of the clothing which adhered to Him!

His raiment is stained with Blood now that He goes to death. It is His own Blood shed for sinners. The drops of bitter anguish testify to their sins which He has taken upon Himself. Each drop of anguish exhibits the infinity of redeeming love.

Does His raiment cling to His Form by reason of that Blood? Much more does His precious Blood unite sinners to Himself. It joins them to Him that they may be truly incorporated into His Body. They are, indeed, to form the glorious robe of His immortality, united to Him and living with His life. They are to shine with the lustre of His inherent Godhead, no longer veiled by any trace of humiliation, but brilliant as Himself, yea, the very manifestation of His brilliancy. Then shall that precious Blood, which was shed in the redness of earthly death, shine in the whiteness of the Triune Sanctity. If He suffers pain when His blood-stained robe is torn from Him, how much greater is the pain when by the devices of Satan any one of His chosen people is torn away from the participation of His life! How sad is the spectacle of Jesus stripped for the Cross! How glorious shall be the spectacle of Jesus glorified in His saints when the heavenly Jerusalem, His mystical Body, shall shine out, having all the glory of God and of the Lamb!

O terrible sight! That Body of Jesus bearing our sins! How wonderful to think that every drop of Blood, each tender sore, shall shine with a glory

of Divine holiness more than if all the stars of the vast universe were gathered into one display of sovereign splendour. Those stars, with all the unseen planets that wait on each, are but the manifestation of His own creative power. The glory of the spiritual heavens, when His Body shall shine out in one collected organism of spiritual magnificence, shall be the manifestation of His victory as Redeemer. Then shall every drop of the Passion be a living principle of glory in all His saints. So shall His humanity, in all the extension of its perfect fulness, be a robe whose 'train fills the Temple' with the multitudinous, personal joyousness of the hosts of His redeemed (Is. vi. 1).

Now is that humanity purpled with Blood—His own Blood, shed in love for sinners. Hereafter shall He appear, and His raiment shall be red with the blood of vengeance—the blood of those who have rejected this redemption, and counted the Blood of the covenant a common thing of earth.

Now He humbles Himself to the shame of His Passion that His enemies may, if it be possible, be subdued by the manifestation of unconquerable love. Then He will manifest Himself in the glory of that love which His saints shall delight to share, and those who would not accept His love must experience in themselves the hatred which they thought to exert against Him.

Alas! how can the soldiers handle so rudely a Form so majestic in suffering, whose very sufferings rise to majesty by their immensity, transcending at once all human weakness and all human power!

Such weakness never has man known before, nor known such power in calmness undisturbed.

O! look again and again upon that sacred Form and think what He is suffering. Go back behind the lapse of centuries. Think of Thyself present while all is being done. Truly thou wast present.—O my soul, thou wast present then, for thou wast present to His mind, and He is suffering all for love to thee!

O! can I ever turn back from this sight and forget it while I think of the world's joys? Must not all the world's joys be but a weary necessity to the soul which has become conscious of this great redemption? He was stripped of all, that He might give Himself to me; and shall not I rejoice to be stripped—yea, if it might be, of all!—so that I may find the full glory of His redeeming love?

Jesu, while I gaze upon Thy Body, I see my own wounds—the wounds which my own sin has wrought! Aye, while I see those wounds I see no less the inherent perfection of Thy Flesh which bears them. Thy Flesh, thus gashed and bruised and wounded, festers not beneath the manifold sores. In absolute perfection of tender purity it receives all from without, but in itself remains with all the sensitive vitality of healthy tissue, ready to assert its integrity of structure and recover from the violence.

O My son, all that evil men can do to Me serves only to show the perfections of My Being, which they cannot destroy. True, My flesh has this recuperative energy. Yes, so does it act

throughout My mystical Body, with constant power to heal.

O Jesu, wounded now that Thou mayest heal, and bleeding that Thou mayest give perfect soundness to one whose wounds are corrupt as mine! O let the touch of Thy wounds give forth the healing virtue to my tainted nature. I see Thy mangled Form, and I know that every wound upon it opens a door of life and health for those who, like myself, must perish if Thou hadst not suffered thus.

My son, seek health from My wounds for thy corrupt nature. Seek not health from any other source, for there is none other that can give it thee. Hide not thy wounds. Let these be laid bare, so that by the contact of My Passion grace may penetrate thy nature, and raise thee to the healthy energy of one new-born through Me.

Dear Lord, Thy wounds make the whole air fragrant to the perception of faith with the virtue of Godhead which they exhale. O, while I gaze on them I seem to be transformed into another man; yea, I seem to grow into a mysterious union with Thyself. The more I become sensitive to Thy sorrows, so much the more do I experience the hidden thrill of supernatural peace wherewith Thou bearest all.

O My son, blessed are they who contemplate My humiliation and suffering, not as strangers, but in the close kinship of apprehensive faith. The sacraments whereby My mystical Body is built up shall give to them the health and the

cure which I bring to My people. In vain I suffer, if My people regard not My sufferings. Look to Me. Yea! remove not from Me the gaze of loving devotion until thou have felt within thyself that thou art healed of thy plague. Thou shalt be healed when thou hast followed Me through Calvary to that which is beyond. Here thou must feel thy corruption to the very end. My health-giving integrity of nature thou shalt find when death is past.

O dearest Lord, my wounds are many, sore, festering, death-bringing wounds, that make the taint of sin spread through all my nature. Thy wounds are many, but they are precious, healing, life-bringing wounds, filling my infirmity with the virtue of Divine sanctity communicated from Thyself. I worship Thee and praise thee while I contemplate Thy holy Form laid bare before the eyes of faith. So let my wounds drink from Thy wounds of the renewing Blood which Thou hast made to flow, that my heart may be purified to behold Thy glory and rejoice in the exaltation of Thy truth.

MEDITATION LVI.

The Crucifixion.

And they set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. —St. Matt. xxvii. 37.	And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. —St. Mark xv. 26.	And there was also a superscription over him, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. —St. Luke xxiii. 38.	And Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the cross. And there was written, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title therefore read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, *and* in Latin, *and* in Greek. The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but, that he said, I am King of the Jews, Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.—St. John xix. 19–22.

1. The Cross set up.

While Jesus is being stripped of His clothes, the soldiers in attendance are erecting the upright pole, which was probably nine or ten feet high—a rough beam of olive or sycamore. He was then thrown upon the ground, and His arms stretched out upon the cross-beam still lying there. His Hands were fastened to this with nails. A line of soldiers kept the space clear for this terrible work to be done. The two thieves were in like manner being fastened

to crosses by the quaternions of soldiers which had charge of them. We can hear their cries, their blasphemies, while this is being done. 'Jesus is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.' The single utterance of prayer which He makes at this time we must consider separately. It is a prayer for forgiveness. He who dies for the sins of the whole world excepts none; and the sin from which He is immediately suffering He makes to be the occasion wherein to symbolize and particularize His intercession for all mankind. The hubbub of angry tumult is going on outside the soldiers, but when the bleeding Form of Jesus is lifted up, that the cross-beam may be fastened in its place, there is a fresh outcry of vindictive rage. Two soldiers hoist up the hanging Body with ropes, and fasten the two beams one against the other. The roughness of the wood tears the raw flesh as it is heedlessly swung to the proper height. Two soldiers holding the Body in their arms lift it up from below. There is a prop driven in between the legs, on which the Body may be so supported, that the weight may not tear the hands from the nails, on which otherwise it rests. The feet are pushed up until the soles are sufficiently flat against the upright beam, to allow of the large piece of iron being driven through them both. All the while the diabolical fury is pouring itself forth from the multitude around that are straining to see.

O my heart, art thou as anxious to behold the love which Jesus has thus wrought out for thee, as

they were to behold the work of hate and violence which the Roman governor was carrying out for them? O heart of man, how hard thou art! The soldiers obey their commander's orders. How slow am I to obey my crucified King!

This great work takes not long to do, but the consequences of this work shall abide for ever. O my heart, does thy Saviour's love abide in thee while thou dost meditate thereon?

Probably the Body of Jesus was exposed in utter bareness, but the crown of thorns had never been taken from His Head. The thorns which earth brought forth by reason of the first Adam's sin still marked the Second Adam with the mocking symbol of victory, still symbolized the worthlessness of the world, still contributed to the irritation wherewith His enemies sought to aggravate the bitterness of death. He is crowned as the King of Peace, retaining His majestic calmness to the end, although the fiendish throngs are still intent for battle (Ps. cxx. 7).

Hear the discordant cries of the multitude. Hear a Voice which speaks to thee with greater power, though in such a manner that the world hears it not. Surely there is a great Voice speaking! O then let us have ears to hear! What is the Crucifixion of Jesus but the hushing of the Eternal Word of God? That Voice may be hushed, but it cannot be dumb nor silent. He who humbles Himself to death upon the Cross is the Lord of immortality. The inmost soul must recognize the Eternal Truth, although the world of false phenomena be incapable of knowing it.

O my Jesu, as I look to Thee upon the Cross, I am overwhelmed with the sense of my sin. Thy love must move me to penitence. What sin has done for me is more than I can know; but when I see Thee bearing my sin, I know that Thou hast done more on my behalf than sin can do against me.

Thou seest, My son, how the world is arrayed against Me. Art thou, then, prepared to stand along with Me and bear all the opposition of the world? If thou will have Me to stand by thee against the assaults of the devil, thou must stand by Me against the world. It is Satan who moves them. But fear not; I have overcome the world, and I will be with thee when the world rages most fiercely against thee. The power of God is hidden in My Cross, but there also is it revealed, as it can be nowhere else. Behold My weakness, and so shalt thou be confident, that in the greatest weakness of My people My power shall be triumphant over all.

O Lord, rather let me suffer all things with Thee than have anything which the world can give without Thee. Thou hast given Thyself for me, and I would give myself to Thee. Do with me what Thou wilt. If only Thou sustainest me, let the world do with me whatever it wills. Great is Thy love whereby Thou hast purchased me for Thyself by Thine own Blood, and in that love I rest secure, for I am sure that no power of the world can tear me from Thee.

2. The Title upon the Cross.

The Cross is a Throne, and He who is nailed thereon is the King of the Jews. Pilate has been determined to carry out his terribly realistic mockery to the very end. He has yielded to Jewish threats in that he has sold the innocent Blood, fearing lest they should accuse him to Cæsar. He has sold his soul, but not his sarcasm. If they will make the idle pretence of treason against this Righteous Man, they must accept the charge as a real one.

Such a charge could have no danger in it save what came from its truth. Human power this Prisoner had none. If Cæsar was to dread Him, it must be because He fulfilled the aspirations of the Jewish nation with Divine power as their Messianic King, by the power of Heaven, and not of earth. If they had regard for Cæsar, they must learn that Cæsar had no regard for them. He would assert the imperial authority by showing what a King of the Jews really was, how all their dreams of power had died out.

The Jews had looked to Messiah to set up an earthly kingdom. Truly those hopes have died. They were not worthy of the name of hope. Yet for these miserable pretences they were ever ready to stir up rebellion. Most of the movements of the day, probably those of Barabbas and the thieves, had ordinarily this insane expectation for their stimulating principle. This Righteous Man was morally worthy of Messiah's Throne. He belonged to a higher order than all other claimants. There was a royalty in

Him. Pilate would not mock Him as claiming to be King; but he would mock the Jews who claimed to look for a king, although repudiating One so much greater than themselves.

The Sanhedrists felt the mockery. He who had proclaimed Jesus as innocent, now proclaims Him as King. Strange that He should be thus proclaimed by such a power. It was a mockery of their nation in its most sacred aspect. But more than that. It was a source of danger. The multitude might be moved to espouse His cause when they saw Him suffering. The Sanhedrists must take care to impress the mind of the mob that this idle claim was altogether unsubstantial.

There was a terrible sense of mysterious reality about the Person of Jesus. It made all hearts quail. This seems to have been the reason why the High Priests' party came forward to be present at the execution, whereas they would otherwise naturally, especially on such a day, have left a condemned man to receive his punishment without any other attendants than the ordinary officials. Their presence was a degradation to themselves, which nothing but the extreme necessity of the case could justify. But they feared lest, after all, there might be some turn in the popular mind, and He might escape.

We cannot fail to trace the operation of a supernatural power in the minds both of Pilate and the chief priests. They would not acknowledge the Divine Presence, but they trembled in the consciousness that a Divine Power was concealed beneath the object of their hatred.

Truly the enthronement of Messiah was to be the overthrow of all the hopes of worldly empire which the Jews had cherished. They had rejected God from being their King, and their kingdom must wither away in nakedness, crowned only with thorns. The exhibition of the King of the Jews on Calvary symbolized well how futile was the Messianic sovereignty to which the Jews aspired, while it concealed the true Sovereignty of the Divine Messiah whom they repudiated. The Jews had sinned away the Divine life and glory of their patriarchal inheritance. Truly as they were unworthy to have such a King of Righteousness as Jesus was, yet the trappings of His death are such as might well befit any impostor whilst claiming to personify their hopes. Their hopes ought to have lifted their hearts up to God; but if they would deify earth in their ambition, they must find its deadness. If they would clothe any aspirant with glory, what could they give but misery, shame, and thorns? The misery, shame, and thorns could not destroy the reality of Him whose royalty they now desired to set aside.

O Jesu, how do all earthly hopes die out in Thy Person! Still would we make to ourselves an earthly heaven, and debase the glory of God to earthly measurement. Help me, as I contemplate Thy Cross, to die along with Thee to every earthly expectation. All here below is vanity, and they who would know Thee must learn the vanity of earthly things.

My son, the only true sovereignty in the world is to be dead to it. If thou seekest glory

from the world, thou showest thereby that thou hast no glory in thyself. Have thou glory in thyself as being thyself possessed of a higher power than the world can give. The Jews desired for their Messiah a kingdom from below. Seek no earthly sway for Me, but learn that all earthly ambitions can only end in death. So give thyself to acknowledge Me in the sovereignty of earthly weakness, and in Me thou shalt partake of the glory of My Divine power.

Yea, Lord Jesu, I am well assured that we can only learn Thy power when we have seen earthly things vanishing away. The religions of the world can lead to no result of true and living glory. It is a Jewish heart which looks forward to any earthly aggrandizement as the reward of Thy people; and they who seek to have Thy goodness manifested in earthly forms, must find all those forms vanish as the glory of Thy truth comes forth to view.

3. The True Sovereign.

Pilate knew not the truth to which in his mockery he was bearing witness. Jesus was indeed the King of the Jews. He was the King to whom the patriarchal promises of David's throne belonged. The kingdom which He inherited was the true kingdom. He would not receive the kingdom from the Jews by their acclamation, but would reign as King by His own inherent right and power all the more gloriously by reason of their repudiation. The earthly hearted

Jews would be unworthy to share His kingdom. None could be the subjects of this kingdom unless they were born again into a better life than that of earth. The Jew of the old dispensation, who clung to earth, must be set aside. The title over the Cross is a proclamation calling to the obedience of the Crucified all who would be truly Jews, having 'praise not of men, but of God' (Rom. ii. 29).

O wonderful invitation! He who is lifted up upon the Cross calls all men unto Himself, that they may be made children of Abraham, heirs of the promise, partakers of the kingdom of God. In Him the promise is accomplished that in Abraham's seed all nations of the earth shall be blest.

Probably the Latin inscription was that which St. Mark gives. To the Roman His name and birthplace were of no account. 'REX JUDÆORUM.' In Him the Jewish idea of sovereignty was to be elevated above the strife of earthly rebellion to the sublimity of a supernatural empire.

How little did Pilate know what that empire involved, or how it should be developed! It was, indeed, only by man's perverseness that this kingdom was eventually to take its place as one of the powers of the lower world, ranking amongst earthly kingdoms, while claiming to rule them all. Nevertheless its triumph was to be continuous, spreading from age to age. He who was now led out to death was to reign in a higher life; and the true seed of Abraham, like Isaac their progenitor, must pass through death in order to share His Sovereignty.

The Aramæan inscription was assuredly that

which St. John gives. It was intended to gall the Jewish pride by describing Jesus in the way that would be to them most offensive. JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. The Leader who had vindicated His claim more truly by their reprobation than He could have done by any military success, was a despised Nazarene. It was before such a One as He that they trembled. Their hate showed their fear. A Nazarene was good enough to be King of the Jews. So Pilate showed. He knew not that this Nazarene was One whose glorious kingdom far transcended all earthly merit. 'Thy people shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified' (Is. lx. 21).

O Jesu, blessed be Thy Name that Thou hast called me into the number of Thy subjects. Grant that I may live worthy of that kingdom whereinto Thou hast called me.

My son, I, the Crucified, am thy King. If thou wilt be My subject, take heed daily to bear the witness of My Cross. See Me hanging upon the Cross. Not in name only, but in reality and truth, must thou be crucified, if thou wilt have share with Me in the kingdom of My power. To man will I show man's weakness, but to thee, if thou followest Me, I will show My power.

O Jesu, Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory. Man cannot crown Thee, but Thou crownest all who come to Thee. Thou art not a King because

others obey, but all who obey Thee are made to reign along with Thee. I kneel before Thy Cross, and I own that it is Thy Throne. It is the gate of heaven. It is the law of life for all Thy subjects. Thou art worthy of the kingdom, for the kingdom comes from Thee. Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy Blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign upon the earth with the power of heaven.

MEDITATION LVII.

The Blaspheming Multitudes.

And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him. He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God. And the robbers also that were crucified with him cast upon him the same reproach.—St. Matt. xxvii. 39–44.

And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ha! thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests mocking *him* among themselves with the scribes said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reproached him.—St. Mark xv. 29–32.

1. The Passers-by.

Many came out of Jerusalem to see the awful sight of Calvary. They knew the state of feeling which had led to the Crucifixion of Jesus. The place where He was crucified was near to the city. Strange reports must doubtless have spread around since the apprehension in the early morning. With what a variety of feelings must these people have gazed upon the spectacle!

The great majority, doubtless, were those whom the chief priests had stirred up to clamour for His death. These would be mainly inhabitants of Jerusalem. There must have been also many from Galilee and elsewhere who knew Jesus in former

time, and had witnessed and profited by His miracles. They must have come wondering if this could really be the same teacher they had known. Many of them not a week ago had joined in His triumphal entry. Then He was known as the Conqueror of death. Now He appears as one of its most miserable victims! Can this be the same?

Alas! they themselves are not the same! They had listened to His teaching and partaken of His miracles, but this only affected the surface of their nature. Their heart did not wake up to respond to the Divine power by which the miracles were wrought and the words spoken. Consequently there was no love, laying hold of the unseen realities of Christ's mission. They had therefore lost their enthusiasm, and the impulses which should have risen up to adoration and love, have given way to blasphemous thoughts and hatred.

O the miserable dulness of the human heart! They would try and think how the supposed imposture had now received its meet recompense, instead of rising up to the indignation which ought to have stirred them against the party in power.

Surely there must have been some who, although they had not given in their definite adhesion as Christ's disciples, looked back with some feelings of gratitude and reverence to the days that were past!

What are the passers-by, but the world? Let us not imagine that they were different from what the world of each successive age is found to be. Very various are the forms of insult whereby Jesus

is crucified afresh by those who call themselves Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan! The outward appearance of outrage may be less revolting under various forms of popular demonstration. If we could see events as angels see them, we should find that spiritual indifference contains greater elements of horror and abomination than the outward atrocities which we cannot see without shuddering.

'They wagged their heads.' This was, indeed, one of the special prophetic marks of Messiah's contumely. O the revolt of human reason against the mysteries of grace! We cannot follow along with the counsels of God in that which befalls His Church, the Body of Christ. We take refuge in a scornful morality, as if the fault were in the Divine ministry, and not in our own sinful nature. St. Luke says that 'the people stood contemplating.' They strove in their proud hearts to see some reason for all that was happening to Jesus. They took refuge in great maxims of Divine truth which for want of higher faith they misapplied. So may we apply the fundamental principles of our religion to heap contumely on Christ when we make them centre around our own puny interpretations instead of accepting them in the radiance of their Divine origin.

How little did they know that the old Temple was indeed being destroyed by their own hands, and that Christ would raise it up again in greater power!

How little did they know of the old ruined

Temple of humanity, which must be destroyed in order that the true Temple, still ready to be called into life, might rise up from its dust!

How little did they know that the Son of God had indeed come into this ruinous heap, to reorganize its imperishable capacities with the new power of a Divine life, and that all the relics of the old grandeur must crumble away unless some drop of Blood from the sufferer of Calvary infused a vitality which nature could not claim!

There is the same ignorance in every age, although it may show itself under very various forms of contempt for what is supernatural in Christ. Because the special evils of our day may seem to gather in various ways about the Cross, we think that the Cross is a sign of feebleness and destruction.

'Come down from the Cross.' Such is the taunt of an ungodly world. The world does not understand that the Cross is the only salvation. To come down from it and find what relief the world can give to any of our perplexities is to be lost in hopelessness.

The claim of Divine Sonship! The world ignores God, and therefore it may well scoff at those who rejoice in such a claim. It does not bring with it any guarantee of worldly prosperity. Rather it involves the necessity of worldly trouble. To come down from the Cross would indeed be setting scorn upon our heavenly title. It would be an act of treason to our King. We come into this world of sin to suffer according to God's will, and until His

glory is revealed we cannot have the truth of our sonship manifested.

The soldiers mocked Jesus. In them we may recognize the power of the world. It does not merely seek to crush the Church of God, but, alas! it insults the Church as powerless while it trembles before the hidden power which it seeks to destroy. They offered Him vinegar, which may have been for refreshment, but they offered it with taunts as if His very need of it showed the folly of His pretensions. He was not such a king of the Jews as they could understand. They bade Him save Himself, perhaps because they thought He called for Elias. They knew not that the Father would rescue His beloved Son by a greater deliverance in death than He could have by avoiding death. The world-power understands no power but that of the world. The soldiers see Jesus apparently hanging at their mercy. They know not that earthquake, and storm, and tempest, and hosts of angels wait upon His Soul, for He is the Sovereign of the world.

O Jesu, who didst bear the reproaches of the people who knew Thee not, grant that I may always remember that they cannot know me if they know not Thee. Empty is all that I can have outside of Thee. Never let me shrink from the world's scorn, but rather welcome it as the condition of my union with Thyself.

Look not for this world's approval, but take heed, My son, that the world's taunts are the result of thine allegiance to Me. Let not My

Name be dishonoured by thy self-seeking. Let it be glorified by thy faithful conformity to My will.

Yea, Lord. So may it be. Let me not fear to hang upon Thy Cross in the midst of a taunting world, if only it be for Thy truth that I am assailed. But, O Lord, have mercy not only upon me, but upon all these who in their ignorance turn Thy Cross to contempt.

2. The Chief Priests and Rulers.

Strange sight! The leaders of the people are come out to witness this execution. They would not go into the Prætorium lest they should be defiled, but they would eat the Passover. Now they come with all the mob that they have stirred up, not only to see three malefactors crucified, but to help the brutalizing unseemliness with which the crowd were assailing the Prophet. We must consider how markedly they would be conspicuous in the throng by their dress. Yet they do not disdain to back up the ignorant multitude in their ferocity.

They can even refer to the miracles of mercy which Jesus had wrought for the purpose of aggravating by the contrast His present condition. 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save.' As they had formerly said, 'He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the chief of the devils,' so now they seek to throw scorn upon those wonderful works of which the people had said, 'When Christ cometh shall He

do more miracles than those which this Man has done?'

Indeed, those miracles were an evidence of power which could not but turn to His glory even now, unless by some suggestion of prejudice they can be made subservient to malicious ridicule.

But these men were really sinning against the Holy Ghost, and this makes them altogether insensible to the ordinary considerations of decorum. Here is truly fulfilled what the Psalmist spoke in the name of Christ: 'For the love which I bare unto them they take now My contrary part; but I [am] prayer' (Ps. cix. 3). He who hangs upon the Cross meets them with the silence of a heart absorbed in prayer. He does not come down from the Cross to save Himself from His present sufferings, because He is preparing to die upon the Cross that He may save them from eternal doom.

Unwittingly these leaders of religion use the very language of Holy Scripture in their jest. David had portrayed this scene of Calvary. 'He trusted in God that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him, if He will have Him' (Ps. xxii. 8).

They were eager for the King of Israel to appear. They do not understand that even now 'the Lord is reigning from the tree' which their own Scriptures, as interpreted by the LXX., had designated as Messiah's Throne (Ps. xcvi. 10). As Ishmael had mocked their forefather Isaac; as Joseph's brethren scorned and maltreated the boy-prophet; as in a later age David was derided by his brethren, who upbraided him with the naughtiness of his heart,

perhaps because they knew that a Divine unction was resting upon him, although it aroused their envy alone, and not their reverence; so is it happening now. They who are after the flesh must persecute Him that is after the Spirit. The aims and modes of life are altogether at variance. The Philistines mocked Samson and perished. One greater than Samson is here, and His outstretched arms shall, as He bows Himself down, overwhelm the multitude of His enemies. The powers of hell shall be destroyed by this death, and they who join the confederacy of Satan must be involved in the same overthrow. Does not the very Paschal Feast remind them how the generation which came out of Egypt had refused and constantly rebelled against that great lawgiver whom God had sent to be a ruler and deliverer? Are they so forgetful of the words of Moses himself, proclaiming that God would require it of every one who would not hearken to the words which the coming Lawgiver should speak in God's Name? (Deut. xviii. 19). They sneer at Jesus because He claimed to be the Elect Servant of God, the Christ, the Son of God. Did not the title gathered from Isaiah's prophecy call to their remembrance that that Elect Servant would be despised and rejected? They knew well the prophet's words, and yet they could 'hide their faces from Him' (Is. liii. 3). O what would be the awakening, when they should see that He was indeed 'numbered with the transgressors' because He bore the sins of all, and that they must remain in their condemnation because they would 'not come to Him that they might have

life' (John v. 40)! It is the Paschal Feast, and they will soon be called to chant the Psalm of the Stone which the builders rejected (Ps. cxviii.). Jesus has already admonished them that on whomsoever that Stone shall fall it shall grind him to powder (Luke xx. 18).

Truly Jesus had professed His trust in God. That trust should not be the idle trust of unclouded prosperity. The deep sorrows of Calvary should be the measure of a trust whereby the Elect Servant of God would acknowledge the unchanging all-sufficiency of His Father's love. How terrible is the contrast between the trustful Messiah and His persecutors! 'Let them be wiped out of the book of the living, and not be written among the righteous. As for Me, when I am poor and in heaviness, Thy Jesus, O God'—the fact that I am Thy Jesus, in whom Thy salvation is made manifest—'shall lift Me up even from the gates of death' (Ps. lxix. 29, 30).

But Israel does not know the day of visitation. As their fathers did, so do they.

Nor they only. Alas, that the leaders of successive generations should be so blinded to the eternal truths of Christ's kingdom by the overpowering prejudices of immediate self-interest! How strangely do men who profess to believe in God, distrust His care for His Church because it does not act upon the rails of their own diplomacy! How strange that they can think to alter God's providence by their own party spirit! O if we would but welcome Christ when He comes to us, how should we find His power ready for our salvation in many

a period of danger, whereas the love which comes to us in some dispensation of the Cross turns to our condemnation because we put it away from ourselves with blind perversity.

O Jesu, let me not be drawn away from Thee by the dictates of a worldly heart. Let me always look for Thy help in every time of trouble. Let no unfaithfulness in Thy Church around me remove my soul from a steadfast reliance upon Thee. Let no danger make me ever distrustful of Thy Word.

My son, thou must often have the power of men arrayed against thee. Nevertheless be not thou afraid. It is needful that thou shouldst be proved by all temptations. Otherwise there will be something lacking in thy faith. Think not that thine own strong purpose is enough. So did My Apostle Peter think. So it was that he fell. Thou must have every ground of human confidence taken away, if thou wouldst be truly perfected.

O Lord, let me be wholly Thine. Though the elders sitting in the gate speak against me, yet do Thou speak for me. Speak Thou to me. Speak Thou within me. Let Thy Voice strengthen me. Yea, speak Thou by me in every word and deed, and let myself be wholly hushed in the sense of Thine all-controlling majesty.

3. The Malefactors.

The malefactors who were crucified along with Jesus joined in the ribaldry. Consider how they

represent the human race. We suffer for our sins. He came into this world to suffer that He might deliver us from our sins. So His very love to us associated Him with us in suffering. Alas! what is our return? Do we not complain as if He had not done for us all that He might have done? Do we not blaspheme His love, as if we had some right to more consideration? How much do we think of our own sufferings, how little of His! Yet should His sufferings teach us the evil of sin, inasmuch as God could not restore mankind at any less cost to Himself. Mankind have robbed God of His glory, and man must glorify God to make reparation for the injury. Man cannot redeem himself by natural effort. Man born in condemnation must suffer along with Christ who died. Shall we not, then, fear God? He who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, will He not with Him freely give us all things? Certainly He will; but He will with equal certainty require from us the full satisfaction of penitence. Penitence must identify us with Christ, or sin with Satan.

O, we must indeed not complain because the Church of God in this world fails of those attributes of glory which she will have in the world to come. Every one has to take part in the struggle with Satan, and many that have prevailed for a season will fall down conquered. The appearance of the Church must not be expected to show the glory which is proper to her Divine life. Woe is me, to think of the condition of Christ's Church in the world! Yet so it must be! The troubles of

Christendom must not waken us to blasphemy, but to penitence and godly fear. The struggle with the evil one is no mere semblance of struggle. Christ must suffer. One by one we must suffer. The Church must suffer. Sin must seem to triumph, otherwise something were wanting to the glorious manifestation of Him who hath delivered us from so great a death and doth deliver. To complain because the Church does not show her Divine unity, or sanctity, or Apostolic character, is like complaining because Christ did not exhibit immunity from the bodily sufferings which were incident to His Incarnation.

No, we must not blaspheme Christ, nor speak scornfully of His Church as if God's Presence were wanting. He will show His Presence in due season. A complaining spirit becomes more and more blind to the glory that lies concealed. With hushed and humbled hearts let us confess our own sinfulness and glorify Him.

O Jesu, let me not complain because Thou in Thy love dost condescend to suffer with us. Let me praise Thee because Thou hast made all suffering to be a means of expressing Thy joyous redemption.

My son, thou shalt find Me ever ready to dwell with those who are of a contrite and humble heart. Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, but rejoice if thou art permitted to share My sufferings. O look to Me, and I will always be with thee in thine.

Dear Lord Jesu, blessed be Thy Name. How true are Thy promises and how mighty are Thine actions! O let me hush every word of complaint! Nay, let my mouth be filled with Thy praise, while I wait for Thy salvation to be revealed in due season.

MEDITATION LVIII.

The Eternal Son.

II. THE PRAYER OF INTERCESSION.

And Jesus said, Father.—St. Luke xxiii. 34.

1. 'FATHER.'

IT is the only begotten, the eternal Son who speaks. He speaks to His Father with the simple expression of the relationship in which He stands to Him. This relationship is the foundation of all His Being, the law of all His action, the warrant of all His hope, the substance of all His glory.

Amongst men the relationship of father and son is only accidental. It is derived only from the lower world. It abides only for a little while. It is powerless to affect the destinies of life. It fades away beneath the glare of an oppressive noontide. It leaves the human struggler all alone. It communicates no inheritance of power. It only tells of union with the emptiness of earth. It fails to light up the dark passage of death. It does not utter any welcome of encouragement from the mysterious ages of the eternal future.

But Jesus is the Son of God in the brightness of mutual love, over which the clouds pass by, not to

obscure, but to develop the essential majesty of the consubstantial union. His Sonship belongs to the self-existent Godhead, far above all names of created intelligence, whether in this life or in that which is to come. It is eternal, not as a memory of fellowship which has passed away, but as a present reality of imperishable joy, while all other relationships are evanescent. It supplies the object of His whole Being, for it is His very life to glorify the Father. No sorrows, however great, in the experience of this transitory world can lessen its Divine effulgence, and all true pleasure springs from its unwearied beatitude. It abides with the consciousness of Personal Fellowship altogether unaffected by the multitudinous companionships of social life, or the isolation of a soul which can find no partner of its sympathies amidst man's fallen race. It is an Almighty Power ever operative amidst every temporary endurance of outward weakness. It reveals the emptiness of earth by the fulness of its inherent truth. It reduces the touch of bodily death to a superficial phenomenon. It speaks with a voice which is never dumb. It speaks even by the created faculties of that human nature wherein He is become Incarnate. It appeals for its own triumphant power to be the all-sufficing reward even of that stupendous Passion which constituted His mysterious discipline during His sojourn here below.

Behold the Son of God stretched upon the Cross, while the Roman soldiers roughly seize His Hands and Feet to nail Him thereon. A crowd are standing around the little empty space which He thus occupies,

and the two thieves are waiting, each to be tied to his cross. Listen to the hum of voices, the uproar of the excited multitude. Amidst the harsh din of their angry impatience, let your ear be attentive to the clear and tender Voice which mingles not with any of that discordant clamour, but rises up in the calm, pure melody of Divine love. Does not that Voice strike on every ear, and sink into every heart? Alas! the heart of man is only moved to greater malice, for the heart of man is at enmity against God.

Let that Voice take possession of thine own soul, whatever may be the condition of those that are around thee. Listen as if that utterance were intended for no other ear than thine. Consider the love wherewith the Only Begotten speaks unto His Father, and speaks to Him for thee. For thy sake He became Incarnate in this world of sin. Otherwise had no such utterance risen up to the Father from the lips of our suffering humanity. Human nature was formed to be the instrument of His glory, but our sin was the occasion of His suffering.

Hear His Voice, and though evil men be raging in blasphemy, think of the unseen hosts of holy angels who are worshipping as they are watching around. There is none of them that can utter that word which rises from the lips of this mysterious Sufferer. They are spirits charged with their several duties by Divine command. He is the Son. He speaks to God as His Father, with all the claims of filial love. The angels wait to see how the Father will answer His cry, for they know that the Father heareth Him always. They wonder at the humilia-

tion to which He is subjected, although they know that the issue shall be glorious with consequences which surpass their anticipation. Let thine heart muse upon this mystery along with them; for, indeed, great as is their interest in this Passion, thine is a greater interest. He is crucified that thou mayest be glorified. Angels shall minister to thee as belonging to Him; but the merits of His Passion are thy glorious portion that thou mayest be able to speak to the Father even as He does, and claim that sonship by grace which belongs to Him by eternal birthright.

O Jesu, the Only Begotten of the Father, grant me so to meditate upon Thy Divine Sonship that I may glorify Thee by living in its wondrous power.

My son, thou beholdest the power of that Sonship manifested in Myself. See that thou yield thyself up to live by its power; for all that is Mine I give to thee that thou mayest be partaker of My fulness, and according to thy faith it shall be done unto thee.

O Lord Jesu, would that I could experience the truth of this Sonship; then would I act as befits so glorious a calling.

My son, thou must act upon its reality, and so shalt thou learn its power. Only by the pain of thy weakness canst thou gain its strength; but the more thou hast to suffer for My Name's sake, so much the more shalt thou find the all-sufficiency of My grace uniting thee unto Myself.

O Jesu, hold not back from me any lesson of Thy Cross. Teach me. Train me. Prove me. Perfect me.

Take up thy cross. My Spirit will not fail to teach thee. This Sonship is indeed a relationship of Divine power. In learning thine own weakness and misery, thou shalt learn its blessedness and power.

Show me Thy glory, Lord, that I may press onward to attain it.

I have given it to thee, My son. Behold it in thyself as it is in Me. It shall enable thee to suffer after My example. Only in proportion as thou knowest the power of this Sonship communicated unto thee canst thou know it to be inherent in Me. Many profess to believe in My eternal Sonship who yet think thereof only as of relationships found amongst men. They who would know Me in My truth must experience the power of My Godhead, the glory of the Father's love, distinct from all that is in the world.

O Lord, hast Thou called me to share this Sonship?

Yea, My son. If thou wouldst be with Me in My glory to rejoice therein, thou must learn to rejoice therein in time, finding therein the fulness of satisfaction which shall raise thee up above all thought of outward things. All things that I have created are but shadows. The only true substance is in Myself. To the

fellowship of this life I call thee, but thou canst not know Me unless thou know this unchangeable life which is in Me, nor canst thou know this life save by being dead to all created things.

O Lord Jesu, Giver of all blessedness to us in our misery, show Thyself to me as the Son of the Blessed. Thou didst pray upon the Cross for my pardon; grant that in Thy glory I may be sanctified. My glory shall be in beholding Thine.

My son, few know Me in My truth! The lesson must be learnt by great suffering. Wilt thou rejoice in sharing My Cross, that thou mayest learn the reality of My joy? My Apostles lived for Me because they lived in Me. My joy rose up within them as they experienced My sufferings. My power acted through them as they found the weakness of all the things of the world. Those believe not in Me truly who desire the things of the world, or rely upon them as means of power. If thou believest in Me truly, rejoice in the assurance of My Sonship. All earthly things pass away. The Sonship and the love of God abide for ever.

O Lord Jesu, I cannot learn what Thy true Sonship is by any faculty of my own nature. I can learn it only by the communication of Thy nature. Thou dost manifest Thy Sonship to us by the endurance of our sufferings. Help me to learn Thy truth by the communication of Thy Divine Substance, that living therein I may indeed die to all the deceits of the world.

Who is so blessed as he that suffers with Thee, if he suffer in Thee? Be Thou my Life, my Strength, my Joy, in every suffering! So shall I attain to know Thy Sonship in the power of that illuminating Spirit whereby Thou callest us, in union with Thyself, to the wonderful relationship wherein we say, even as Thou dost, 'Abba, Father.'

2. The Appeal of this Sonship.

Jesus appeals to the Father in the midst of His human sufferings. Terrible sufferings! How shall the weakness of the creature bear them? We are not to suppose that we can rise superior to them by the power of the human will, or the conviction of the human intellect. The pride of man may raise him above many things, but it cannot raise him to such strength. If we would thus rise, we must rise up to God. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' If we are thus to rise, there must be a new, a better life, into which we can rise. That life is the uncreated life—the life of God.

So, then, Jesus endured His Passion by the strength of this Divine life. He did not endure as being the greatest of men. That would not have given Him the victory. He endured as being the Son of God. So in Gethsemane, He appeals to the Father in the power of the true, the only, the consubstantial Sonship. So upon the Cross, His first, His last utterances are addressed to the Father. Thus by the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God.

His Divine Nature and Sonship were not a mere latent adjunct or nominal relationship of His earthly Being. In them we are to look for His living Personality. He cannot act as man, without also acting in manhood as God. Manhood brought no powers of action to the Eternal Word by whom all things were created. Manhood only brought to Him the mysterious capacity of suffering. In manhood He suffers, and in suffering He rejoices, with the strength, the bliss, of God.

His appeal to His Father is, therefore, the evoking of the Divine power within Himself wherein He is consubstantial with the Father. He cannot act in the Godhead as a self-originating power. He is not an independent, a separate, a second God. As He is God, He is the only begotten Son, and therefore He must ever act in the consciousness of this inalienable relationship. Whether it be in His mediatorial intercession or His personal triumph, He looks to the Father. 'Father, forgive them.' 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.'

So must it be with ourselves if we would act in Him. We are not only to look for strength from God, but in God. The consubstantial Sonship flowing onward to ourselves by the communication of grace is the strength of our life, and we must rise up to this relationship if we would gain the true answer of our prayers. Our life is hid with Christ in God, and our acts cannot be effectual in the world, we cannot rise, as we ought to rise, superior to the world's suffering, unless we call forth the supernatural power of our Divine sonship.

This sonship must be to us a real and habitual joy, if it is to be a real strength. Our delight must be 'to do Thy will, O my God.' We may receive power from those whose fellowship gives us no delight, but we cannot receive power from God in Christ save by the filial communication of His nature making us rejoice in Him. The power which God gives to His people is not the external reward of their service, but the outcome of that supernatural power by which the service is rendered. If our sin leads us to rejoice in anything distinct from God, we do not fail of getting what God would give, but we hinder the proper action in ourselves of what God has already given. A joy however transitory, which is at variance with the simple joy in God, stops the flow of Divine power which belongs to the Sonship of which we are partakers in Christ.

So with suffering. This sonship enables us to rise superior to all suffering, not by a proud contempt, but by the development of a holy joy, which is the strength of our filial relationship to God in Christ. The more we suffer, the more does this Divine joy fill the soul, if we suffer in the strength of our Divine sonship. It is in the very nature of things that suffering should be to us in this sinful world a necessary condition of rising up to the Divine power of our vocation, not as a matter of merit to be rewarded, but as an exercise of triumphant fellowship issuing in that participation of the Divine omnipotence which postulates the fruition of the Divine blessedness. We must shrink from nothing which belongs to our Divine relationship. In all that we

have to suffer, we must call up the reality of our Divine sonship to be our joy, and this cannot be done in any abstract manner. Our relationship as God's sons is a substantial fellowship with God as our Father. We must, therefore, be looking to God in personal love, with holy prayer, if we would have that power which belongs to His children.

Jesu, Thou didst look up to the Father with love to Thine enemies undiminished, because Thou didst abide in the consubstantial glory of His Fatherly love. Keep me ever true to this love, that loving Thee I may love them for Thy sake, and rejoice in the very difficulties which love has to encounter, because they make me more sensible of Thine unchanging love.

O My son, live in love, so shalt thou be the true child of thy heavenly Father. So shall My love be perfected in thee, and thou shalt abide in Me continually.

O Lord, let it be ever foremost in my heart that I am Thy child, and must walk in the power of Thy love. While I exercise Thy love, I feel Thy love. Its brightness cheers me, and its strength upholds me. O let all outward opposition fill me with this joy, making me live more simply in Thine all-surrounding love.

3. The Joy of this Sonship.

We must be careful not to think that our Lord was in any way separated from the joy of God belonging to Him as the only begotten Son, because

His human nature was subjected to the mystery of the Passion. He was not suffering in order to satisfy the requirements of another God, different from Himself. In the perfect unity of a love of which all created love is but a feeble image, He rejoiced to accomplish the Father's purpose in the redemption of the world. Every act of His human suffering was wrought in the exercise of Divine joy. He found a joy in doing what the Father willed. He found a joy in acting with the Father's co-operation. He found a joy in looking to the Father for support. He found a joy in presenting every act unto the Father as He accomplished it.

Such was the Divine joy of His life as the Son of God. In the midst of His sufferings He could not call upon the Divine life within Himself to render His sufferings illusory. Had they lost their reality they would have failed of their purpose. He suffered more than any human suffering can equal, because He suffered in the strength of God. But the Passion by which He redeemed the world was as truly a joy to Him in the doing as it was to the Father in welcoming. The justice and the love of God which ordained the mysterious work of Redemption were as truly His own justice and His own love as they were the Father's. He did not merely satisfy a Personal requirement of the Father. He satisfied a requirement of the undivided Godhead in which He shared. As the Father showed His love in sending His Son, so the Son of God also loved us Himself, and gave Himself for us. He suffered in order 'to know the bliss of saving thee.'

We should never lose sight of this fellowship of the eternal joy in which He as our Redeemer lives one God with the Creator. The undivided act of the Divine life is an act of undivided joy in undivided love. The Father rejoices in that which the Son accomplishes. The Son rejoices in that which the Father originates. The Holy Ghost rejoices in anointing the manhood which the Son assumes with the fulness of power needful for the satisfaction of the Divine purpose. The joy of God is absolutely one.

The Son of God does not assume our human nature so as to be merely an instrument of suffering. His human heart rises up with the full power of the anointing Spirit, so as to claim the personal love of the Father to whom He speaks. As He learns obedience by the things which He suffers, so He learns the Father's love by every incident of suffering which awakens His appeal for the Father's support. His human nature gains an ever-increasing development of power by every suffering. Without the suffering He could not have separated Himself from the sinful world with which He was by His material nature allied. Without the joy of Divine love He could not have uttered the cry which the Eternal Father accepted.

So must it be with us. The fruit of the Spirit is love and joy. As the children of God in Christ, we must be living by the power of the Spirit in a blessed experience of Divine sonship, however great may be the sufferings which our outward nature has to bear. The suffering and the joy are not incompatible, since

the two natures are combined in the regenerate as they are in Christ Himself; but the suffering of the human nature, however great, will be valueless unless there be the anointing joy of the Divine nature, whereby the Holy Ghost enables us to rest in the Personal, Fatherly fellowship of God.

This joy and peace in believing must be the principle which inspires our prayers. The prayers with which we appeal to God in our suffering must be the outcome of the love wherewith we abide in God by the grace of Christ. Our true joy is not that God gives us what we ask, but that He gives us the power and privilege of asking.

Even when we pray with much earnestness, how apt we are to remain as it were outside of the Divine nature, looking for earthly things as tokens of God's love! Therefore God frequently refuses to hear our prayer. If we would look away from earthly things, accepting all the events of life as the appointment of His love, how we should find Him ready to answer our prayers, addressed to Him, as they would be, and should be, in the simple desire of having His love made more and more manifest!

O Lord Jesu, in Thee be all my joy! In Thee may I rejoice, partaking with Thee of the Father's love! Alas, that I should be so ready to seek joy from the world, so slow to find my joy with Thee in God, by the power of the Holy Ghost!

Yes, My son. Thou seekest that which profits not, and turnest away from what should give thee infinite delight. Thou art not straitened

by any unwillingness of Mine to give thee what is good. Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it. Desire of Me, and I will give thee blessings infinitely greater than thou canst devise for thine own self. Soon would I make My Church to triumph over the world, if My people would look to Me instead of looking to the world. The powers of the world and the malice of the evil one hinder not My work so much as the sluggishness of My people, who will not rise to desire the things of heaven.

O Lord Jesu, Thy testimonies have I claimed as mine heritage for ever; and why? They are the very joy of mine heart. So hast Thou taught me to speak by the words of Thy Psalmist of old. So would I indeed seek no heritage of earthly power, but only the inheritance of Thy children. Thou, O Lord, Thyself art my Portion; I have promised to keep Thy law.

My son, all will be well with thee if thou dost seek thy joy only in My Sonship, but thou must take heed that thou fall not away. Remember that the Son of man hath not where to lay His Head upon the earth. See Me stretched upon the Cross, with My Head bleeding as the thorns have pierced My brow. See Me with My Head abiding in the Bosom of the Father, wherein I ever abide. Will thou know the joy? Then fear not to endure the suffering. Think not that suffering comes by accident, and may well be avoided. My sufferings are the law of

all perfection, and if thou wouldst attain to My joy, thou must hide thyself in Me to suffer and to die.

O Jesu, great is the joy of those who live in Thy love! I am unworthy to share it. Nevertheless, unworthy though I be, the grace of Thy Passion can raise me to all the demands of Thy holy Will. Do with me, then, whatever Thou wilt. Let it be my joy to yield my will to Thine, to meditate upon the infinite love wherewith Thou didst redeem me, to share in Thy sufferings as Thy grace shall enable me to be conformed to Thee, to hide myself from the world around in the blessed sanctuary of Thine eternal love, to praise Thee for the glory wherein the Father welcomes Thee, and to give myself up to be wholly Thine, so that by the discipline of Thy Cross I may find my portion for ever in the joy of Thy Sonship.

MEDITATION LIX.

The First Word from the Cross.

Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.—St. Luke xxiii. 34.

1. Forgiveness.

Consider what it is to be forgiven, to be taken back from a condition of angry separation to that of love. The sacrifice of Calvary is the sacrifice of atonement, making us to be at one with God.

That were no forgiveness which should leave us apart from God. The penalty of sin is not to be found in the external sufferings which follow upon it, but in the separation from God as the true Principle by which alone human life can be sustained in its integrity. Man created in the image of God must live with the likeness of God, and this can only be if he lives at one with God in the fellowship of the Divine life.

Jesus continued ever one God with the Father while He bore the external consequences of our sin. He does not plead with the Father as if God were a Being external to Himself, but in the unity of Divine life. His Manhood, in which He has borne the penalty of sin, is hypostatically united with the Godhead in which He is One with the Father.

When He pleads for forgiveness, He pleads that

man may be gathered back into the fellowship of the Divine life; and that forgiveness is an answer to His prayer, because they receive it by being incorporated into His Body. They are given to Him that they may be forgiven in Him; united to His Manhood, and therefore partakers of His Godhead.

He pleads for them to be forgiven, that His Manhood may thus have the reward of what He has suffered. His Manhood has a merit beyond that of any other creature. No created being as such can have any merit, for created life is nothingness, and therefore all the actions of the creature are nothingness. The actions wrought through the humanity of Christ have a supernatural merit, for they are the acts of the Creator. They must, therefore, claim a reward. They are rewarded by the exercise of Divine power, and that manifests itself by incorporating into Him those who were previously outside of Him. He is glorified in them as they, one by one, are made partakers of His Divine glory.

Mankind outside of Christ was under the curse of sin. As the Manhood of Christ extends itself, they are taken into the fellowship of the Divine love. The Spirit of power whereby He lives, rests upon His members with the fulness of the eternal blessing. As His Spirit develops itself in His members, who are thus taken out of the power and bondage of sin, Jesus receives His reward.

Jesus desires the forgiveness of the world, even as the Father does, for He is one God with the Father. As the Father sent Him to be a Propitiation for our sins, so He came desiring to effect that

propitiation, and He therefore seeks the Divine acknowledgment of the work done in our nature.

This propitiation is not a work of Divine power from without. It is a sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction offered by Divine power acting through man's moral nature. It therefore could not produce its effect without prayer. Without prayer the action of the Manhood would have been purely mechanical. The human will needed to correspond in obedience with the Divine command, and to act in union with the Divine purpose. An aimless morality would be no perfection in the sight of God. If we are not seeking God's love in what we do, our act does not meet the demand of His love. The propitiatory act of Christ could not, therefore, have its result without a prayerful desire for its acceptance.

Christ did not come merely to fulfil a moral law, so as to abide in His Father's love in His own Person, but He came to seek and to save that which was lost, and bring mankind back from the mischief of the Fall to the participation of God's love. He therefore must pray for others, that through them He might receive His reward. Without such intercession the oblation of Calvary would have been ineffectual.

His human nature was not like the finite humanity of fallen man, frozen up in the selfish deadness of an isolated personality. As He possessed human nature in its living reality and integrity, He could not but be conscious of its possibilities of development, and therefore He could not be satisfied unless He gathered into the participation of His

living energy all those who should make up the full number of His elect, the complete perfection of His Body as extended in His members, the Church universal. This anticipation was essential to His offering of Himself to the Father. He could not offer Himself for an isolated aim of selfishness, nor with a dead crust of insensibility, nor with a vague consciousness of possibility. It was necessary that He should plead with a definite sense of man's need, and of His own fitness to supply that need by the union of the Divine nature with His human organization. Thus would His propitiation, His prayer, and His promised reward be effectual in limitless bounty to mankind, and Divine welcome for the Church whom He purchased as His Bride.

O Jesu, how great is Thy love who hast suffered for my sins! As Thou hast borne me in Thy love, pleading for my forgiveness, grant that I may abide in Thy love, accomplishing Thy holy Will.

Consider, My son, what I have suffered for thy forgiveness, and learn in My love to thee how great must be thy hatred of sin, which has caused Me so much suffering.

O Lord, grant that I may so look to Thee, that my will may be wholly absorbed in Thine. As Thou desirest my forgiveness, let me hunger after Thy righteousness.

My son, I created thee that thou mightest be made perfect in holiness, according to the fulness of that glory wherein I would perfect

thy human nature, taking it unto Myself. I humbled Myself to the likeness of thy sin, that I might shine forth in thee when thou shouldst be perfected in My likeness.

O my Lord Jesu, my Saviour, hast Thou desired my perfection, and shall not I desire it? O how great must that sin be which I hate so little! Alas! deliver me from it, and teach me to desire Thy forgiveness, that I may be sanctified according to Thy desire.

2. The Persons to be forgiven.

Jews? Romans? Yes! But not only they! Jesus pleads for all who nailed Him to the Cross; that is, for all mankind. It was the sins of all which did this. Roman soldiers were carrying out the malice of blinded Sanhedrists and Jews. Those Jews were carrying out the malice of the human heart. To whatever nation Jesus had come, He would have found the antagonism of our nature just the same.

Not only would He have found it so, if He had come. He has come to one nation after another, and everywhere He does find it the same. The natural heart is at enmity with God. The things of God are foolishness to it, because they are spiritually discerned.

Man will not accept Christ unless he can adapt Christ so as to suit the fancies and desires of each successive age. In order to be forgiven, man must become conformed to Christ; but he tries to conform Christ to himself. There is a living power in Christ

which makes men afraid. Man, therefore, seeks to reduce Christ to his own position of deadness, that he may accept Christ without inconvenience or apprehension.

Forgiveness is not what man really desires, for he does not realize the sin which needs to be forgiven. He would accept heaven if Christ would give it to him and leave him to himself; but forgiveness requires that he shall die to himself. He would sooner Christ should die to all the holy glory of the Divine life, than die himself to the lusts and appetites of his own sinful flesh.

Therefore the world is continually inventing new forms of Christianity. Every such endeavour is for the purpose of eliminating the strictness of the Divine requirements from the religion of Christ. In all these ways they nail Jesus to the Cross! The devotional life of Jesus, His love to the Father, suits them not. The social teaching of Jesus, His love to man, suits them not. The spiritual earnestness of Jesus, the discipline of the earthly nature, perfecting it for the kingdom of heaven, suits them not. They would like a heaven upon earth, but they have no desire to quit earth for heaven above. They attribute it as a fault to Jesus, if there is anything in the religion of His Church which does not suit their own will. They may, like the Sanhedrists, put forward an accusation of blasphemy, because the teaching of Christ does not suit their natural conceptions of religion. Or, again, of bigotry, because it does not suit their self-will. Or of social unfitness, because it does not suit their pride. Or of

fanaticism, because it does not suit their covetousness. Or of folly, because their wisdom reaches not to its mysteries. Or of exclusiveness, because they feel not the supreme demands of grace.

Anyhow, they will try and adapt Jesus to the needs of their own age, by nailing the Eternal to the Cross!

We must look for a greater and more terrible uprising of the nations against Jesus before the end of all things. Doubtless there will be in many respects a repetition of His Passion in His mystical Body, the Church, when the great apostasy comes. This will be the means of arousing again an Apostolic fervour such as belonged to the first age of the martyrs. So shall the remnant of the faithful be found sanctified and meet to welcome the Lord when He cometh.

We must see that we really cherish a deep sense of our need of forgiveness. As Jesus has prayed that we might be forgiven, let us seek to know more of that holiness without which no man can see the Lord.

Alas! how do we crucify the Son of God afresh continually by our own individual sins! For us He prayed, one by one, foreseeing all the various temptations by which we should be assailed, and our weakness and wilfulness in yielding to them.

Think of thyself as the object of thy Saviour's prayer. When thou art tempted to sin, look with all thy heart to Him whom the soldiers are nailing to the tree, and remember that it is thy sinfulness which is really striking the blow. The hammer

would have fallen harmless had it not been weighted by thy sins.

O Jesu, I have caused Thee to be crucified, and in the very act of Thy Passion Thou pleadest for me! O shall not Thy love to me hold me back from sinning against Thee?

My son, I have suffered this outwardly in the flesh in order that the sight of My sufferings might win thee to seek after holiness in love to Myself, but thou canst not see that which I suffer in My inmost heart by reason of thy sins which I have to bear. O that thou wouldst come to the Father by Me, in the strength of My Holy Spirit! I have suffered for thy sins more than thou canst know. Yet if thou will thus come to Me, even these My sufferings shall find their recompense in thy pardon and acceptance.

Blessed Jesu, let me cling to Thy Cross! Let me feel how my acts of sin are wounding Thee! So let me repent! O let me hear the Voice of Thy love speaking with a power altogether beyond my sin! Let that Voice draw me away from my sin! Let that Voice draw me to the Father! In hearing that Voice with grateful penitence, let me obtain the forgiveness for which Thou pleadest.

3. The Blindness of Sin.

The Jews could not see God Incarnate in Jesus Christ. They knew not what they were doing in

crucifying Him. They were responsible, indeed, for not recognizing in Him the Divine Messiah promised to their fathers; but they were blind, and therefore could not recognize Him. They were responsible for that blindness, and by reason of that blindness they were madly striving to do they knew not what! Yea, they thought to fight for God when they were fighting against God! They had allowed Satan to get the mastery over them, and he made them rush onward to their own destruction.

Yet does Jesus plead this their ignorance in extenuation of their terrible crime. Though their heart was so estranged, blinded, perverted, yet were they the children of the covenant. They still looked for that covenant to have its fulfilment towards them, although they knew not what that covenant involved, nor what was the meaning of its promises.

They wanted 'to establish their own righteousness' by an external kingdom, instead of submitting themselves to the righteousness of God that they might be renewed thereby. They thought they had eternal life because they had the Scriptures; but they would not come to Jesus that they might have that life to which those Scriptures testified. They did not see how near God had come to them by His humiliation to be their promised Redeemer, and so they fulfilled all that prophets had written, by condemning Him who was the Just One, the Lord of life.

How merciful is this dear Lord, who knoweth whereof we are made, and remembereth that we are but dust! 'As His majesty is, so is His mercy.'

We can see neither His glory nor His condescension. His glory, to which we are blinded, is what makes our sin so great. His condescension, greater than we can conceive, is what holds us up so that we perish not altogether in our sin.

How does the penitent soul listen with adoring thankfulness to that prayer of Jesus! O with what shame must we hide our faces when we hear that plea which He puts forward on our behalf.

Truly, Lord, I did not know what I was doing in every act by which I have sinned against Thee! But that which I know not, teach Thou me. In my blindness I have sinned against Thee. Open Thou mine eyes by Thy grace to behold my sin. Had I seen my sin, surely I could not have sinned. Now, therefore, show me Thy grace that I may seek Thy grace.

If thou wouldst see My grace, thou must come to the full sight and knowledge of thy sin. Look, then, My son, to Me as I hang upon the Cross. So shalt thou see thy sins which I bear, and the love whereby I have obtained thy forgiveness.

Dear Lord, I desire to know more and more of my own sinfulness and of Thy holiness. Yea, I desire to know more and more of that wrath which awaits the sinner from an offended God, and of that love whereby Thou, our Incarnate Redeemer, callest us back to the Father's pardon.

My son, meditate upon My Passion. Here I bear thy sins upon My suffering heart. In My glory consider how I bear thee up before

the Father, glorified in My holiness so as to be worthy of His love. Learn thus the blindness of thy sin, and the misery in which it has overwhelmed thee. Learn thus what thou art doing in every act of sin, however little thou mayest heed it. Learn thus what thou oughtest to do, so that living in My love thou mayest be conformed in Me to the Father's will. In thine ignorance thou hast died, but in the use of My grace thou shalt gain that knowledge which is eternal life.

Blessed be Thy Name, O loving Lord Jesu! O let Thine appeal for my forgiveness ever ring through mine ears, and rouse the deepest recesses of my heart! O that I might have a heart to know Thee in all Thy truth! Cleanse my heart, I pray Thee, from all that still blinds me to Thy worship and love. How great was Thy love when Thou didst behold me in my sin! O let me abide in Thy love, that I may behold Thee in Thy holiness!

MEDITATION LX.

The Thieves.

Then are there crucified with him two robbers, one on the right hand, and one on the left. — St. Matt. xxvii. 38.

And with him they crucify two robbers; one on his right hand, and one on his left. —St. Mark xv. 27.

And there were also two others, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. . . . And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, Art not thou the Christ? save thyself and us. But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said, Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom.—St. Luke xxiii. 32, 39–42.

Where they crucified him, and with him two others, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.—St. John xix. 18.

1. The Human Race.

Messiah was to make His grave with the wicked (Is. liii. 9). We may take these two thieves as representing the whole race of man, penitent and impenitent.

Consider them first in combination; then separately.

They were not crucified because of Jesus, but Jesus was crucified along with them. Jesus dies as one of us. All three were led out to be crucified;

Jesus for His claim to sovereignty, the thieves also probably for insurrectionary conduct involving treason against the imperial government. Mankind die by reason of rebellion against God. Jesus dies, not because His claim to be the King of the Jews, as the Son of God, is a false one; but because His claim is true. He dies so as to show that death has over Him no power; for while He dies as Man, He still lives as God, and He will take up His human Body again, that having died, it may live.

Death is the penalty upon the two thieves, but death is the means of triumph to Jesus. He came into this world to suffer along with us sinners, and to die for us. If we had gone to death without Jesus we could have had no hope; but as Jesus goes before us, we can follow Him to death with a knowledge of resurrection through His power if we are united with Him. While I see the centurion going in front and the soldiers on either side, I seem to see the prince of this world, and the powers of darkness who are round about us. Then I see the title painted on the board—'JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.' Death is not the end of everything. It is to be the point of trial to show whether we are to belong to Satan eternally, or whether we can pass through death to life. I see Jesus. He is the Son of God who was announced as the Conqueror of death. He follows in great weakness. Yet as I see Jesus going to die, I know that He will pass through death to resurrection, so that by death He will be delivered from the sufferings of this present world. I see Simon the Cyrenian carrying part of the Cross, and

yet not really making it less for Jesus. He gains a blessing by being permitted to carry it. So I see the Church, the members of Christ, sharing in Christ's sufferings on the way to death, and His merits communicated to them. Then I see the two thieves bearing their crosses, the penalty of their misdeeds. In them I see all the world—two classes of men; those who come to repentance, and those who do not.

O my soul, thou must follow Jesus with much self-abasement. Repine not if thou hast to suffer something. The merits of Jesus will be given to thee thereby, as Simon the Cyrenian shared in a special blessing by being so close to Jesus in His suffering. Repine not if thine own sins require that thou bear thine own cross. Look to Jesus, who is going before thee as the perfect Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction. Bear the burden of thy sins whilst thou hast to bear it. Look forward to be quit of it by no other way than by dying. 'He that has died is justified from sin.' While we live in the life wherein we have sin, we must be thankful, not indignant, at having to bear all that our sins have occasioned.

O Jesu, who in such wondrous love hast come to earth to share our sufferings and die as Man, grant me to accept all suffering, knowing that such is my natural condition as a sinner, and to follow Thee in this valley of the shadow of death, so that I may partake of the virtue of Thy Passion.

My son, take up thy cross and follow Me without fear. If thou will look to Me and rely upon Me, thou shalt be safe even when thou

comest to die. Think not that life in the world can be otherwise than a heavy burden for sinners. Thou must realize the state of condemnation wherein thou wast born; and though I will help thee in thy sufferings by the power of My Holy Spirit, nevertheless thou must feel the burden of the flesh whilst thou art here, even as I Myself have felt it though I had no sin.

O Lord, when I look to Thee going before me, I feel myself strengthened to bear the burden of my cross. I would not have it taken away so as to be changed for all the joy that the world has got to give. In that joy I could not behold Thee going before me. How then could I look forward to death? Without Thee in life, I must be without Thee in death. Yet I must be without Thee unless I share Thy Cross. O grant me grace so to behold Thee in the midst of every suffering, that I may find amidst the sufferings of earth the joy of heaven. How sweet it is to know that we are going onward to the grave! To follow Thee thither! There I look to behold Thy glory, which the outward veil of earthly life hides from my view.

2. The Penitent Thief.

Consider the one who follows Christ most closely. Think of him as the one who will be brought to penitence.

Surely he watched Christ all the way—saw Simon impressed into the service to take part in carrying the Cross, heard Jesus address the women, saw Him

refuse the narcotic draught. Probably he could not see much more; for when the four soldiers began to fasten Jesus to the Cross, the four that were in charge of him would be treating him in like manner. It is uncertain whether the thieves were nailed. Possibly they may have been only tied. Nailing, however, was the common practice.

Has he not watched all along, hoping that the mysterious Person who led the way would interpose at last with some miraculous exhibition of power? Do we not often follow Jesus in suffering with an expectation that He will do for us something wonderful to effect our relief? We must learn to put aside such thoughts. Follow Jesus to die. No other following of Jesus is worthy of the name. The heart must accept the cross, and the death. Otherwise we fall into unbelief. So both the thieves broke out for a while in execrations against Jesus.

The excruciating torment often made the wretched victims cry out against all who were standing by. One, however, of these two soon felt the power of the example of Jesus as something mightier than even his own sufferings. As he hung upon his cross—possibly when the soldier had just finished affixing the title upon the board which was fastened over the Head of Jesus—he suddenly began to see the real character of that power which had been gaining such hold upon him as he came along.

We need not think that these 'thieves' were common criminals of the meaner sort. More probably they belonged to the class of zealots who, in defiance of Roman rule, had given themselves up to

lives of plunder. Having their origin from Judas of Galilee, they developed into the Sicarii, whose excesses aggravated afterwards the troubles of the Jewish war. Very probably Pilate caused these two men to be crucified along with Jesus, in order to intensify the insult to the Jewish nation, as they might be represented as suffering for the same cause of Jewish freedom for which he desired to make Jesus an apparent martyr. He had no idea that he was bringing about the accomplishment of a prophecy by the details of his sentence, nor can he have wished to turn Jesus into mockery. The mockery was aimed at the Jews. As far as Jesus was concerned, the symbolism of the criminals united with Him in death was no mockery. It was Divine. He came into the world of sinners to die for sinners. He makes His grave with us, for we are all sinners. The penitent and the impenitent are the representatives of mankind.

We need not, then, be surprised at this man having a capacity for perceiving better things, however lawless his habits of life may have been. Perhaps it was his zeal for the Messianic hope which he had previously so much misunderstood which helped him to perceive that there was a kingdom of a higher kind than that of earth. When He saw Jesus so divinely dying for the kingdom, the truth may have lit up all his old aspirations. He may not improbably have been well versed in the Old Testament prophecies. Once catching the proper clue to their interpretation, he may have seen what their real purpose was. It would then be no unfounded impulse,

but a real acceptance of the faith of his fathers in its truest, highest sense, which would make him perceive that Jesus was now suffering all that Moses and the prophets had said that He should suffer. He read that title upon the Cross as giving a key to all the hopes of his lawless career. He could appeal to his fellow-sufferer to acknowledge the sinfulness of their own lives, and in the suffering of the innocent Jesus to acknowledge a Divine mystery that was full of hope. 'Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss.' So could he look to Jesus and say to Him, 'Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.'

O Jesu, the promises which Thou hast made to us are not of this world. When I see how Thou sufferest who dost give the promises, I cannot refuse to suffer in order that I may receive the promise. Grant me true repentance, that I may feel how fully all these sufferings are deserved which may come to my lot. Open mine eyes to behold Thy true glory, that I may have my part in Thy true kingdom.

My son, surely throughout eternity thou will praise God for those sufferings which have opened thine eyes to recognize My true character. Alas, how many look to Me, expecting that I will set them free from the sorrows of this life! If I were to do so, they would never come to Me to rescue them from the sufferings of the next. Seek to have thy penitence deepened by

every suffering which befalls thee here. Acknowledge that thou sufferest justly here. So only canst thou look to Me. So only can I help thee.

O Jesu, before I was troubled I went wrong; but now have I learnt to keep Thy commandments. I have been too prone to think of Thee as if Thy power would show itself in the world. O help me to die with Thee to the world, that I may behold Thy power and glory, and live for that life which shall be hereafter.

3. The Impenitent Thief.

We may be brought very near to Jesus in suffering, and yet we may entirely fail of apprehending our relation to Him. Suffering is a great teacher, but the soul must be prepared for penitence. Suffering illuminates the eye of faith. In vain, however, is all possible suffering, in vain the fullest opportunities of gracious illumination for the soul that is hardened in self-seeking.

This thief, like the other, may have been engaged in national resistance to the tyranny of the Roman empire. Yet was there wanting in him any appreciation of the glory of Messiah's empire, for which the struggle was being nominally waged. He, therefore, was close to Messiah in the very moment of Messiah's triumph, and he could not read the language of events. He could only see the death. He did not feel his need of Messiah for himself to deliver him from sin. He could not, therefore, perceive the power

of that death. Death opened to the eye of the penitent the vision of a kingdom of righteousness which was to follow. Death closed to the eye of the impenitent all the future possibilities of deliverance. The impenitent thief had lived only for this world, even though he may have cherished a rebellious pride in professing to make a stand for Israel's hopes. He, therefore, must perish with this world. He was unfit for any participation in the glorious kingdom that should be.

How careful must we be, when struggling for the truth of Jesus, to struggle in the Spirit of Jesus! In vain do we uphold a cause, however true, if we uphold it in the spirit of the world.

How must we learn truly to repent of our own sins if we would have the gift of pardoning grace obtained for us by the death of Jesus!

The impenitent thief had no thoughts for Jesus in his suffering. He was absorbed in his own trouble. We must not think that we shall come to Jesus anyhow at the end, although during life we have neglected Him. What a terrible thing to blaspheme Jesus in dying! Yet how many do this! Not many in actual words; but, O, numbers do this in very deed! They do not accept their sufferings as the due reward of their deeds. They take sickness as if it were an injury rather than a blessing. They find no consolation in the ministrations of the Body of Christ. Jesus may be as near to them in the Sacraments of His Church as He was to the impenitent thief who hung by His side; but they have no eyes to perceive the presence of Jesus as the Son of God,

the King of Israel. They can only cry out against the Divine providence, instead of humbling themselves before the Divine love.

O Jesu, grant me such penitent love that I may indeed accept every suffering as my due, and praise Thee for it as a gracious remedy ordained to deliver me from my sin, that I may share Thy grace. When I think of the impenitent world, I tremble lest I should be found amongst them.

My son, if thou seekest to have My Holy Spirit abiding with thee in diligent devotion, then shalt thou surely attain to true and holy penitence. By thyself thou canst not attain, but thy Father which is in heaven will give His Holy Spirit to all who ask Him in My Name.

Dearest Lord, why does not the sight of Thy death touch my heart more than it does?

Thou must contemplate My death in the power of My Spirit. In vain dost thou see Me suffer what man has justly got to suffer, if thou seest not the innocency that is in Me, and the glory of the life into which I pass by dying. Thou must read the mystery of My death in the light of another life. Then will all the difficulties of this present world be made clear to thee. All seems to be wrong, and everything must remain wrong, if thou will estimate all things only within the limits of time. Open thine eyes, My son, then shalt

thou behold Me. Then shalt thou see in Me the righteousness of God. Then see how God hates evil. Then hate thyself and rise to the love of God.

O my Jesu, would that I were more penitent than I am! Help me to repent, that I may accept Thee! Help me to behold Thee, that I may learn to repent! O my Jesu, I desire to repent of everything that I have done, whether it be good or bad! My best actions are defiled with sin in Thy sight. Make me to see my sin more and more, that I may at length behold the truth of Thy glory.

MEDITATION LXI.

The Second Word from the Cross.

And he said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise. —St. Luke xxiii. 43.

1. The Royal Mediator.

The penitent thief appeals to Jesus as a King. It is as a King that Jesus suffers. His kingdom is a kingdom of higher glory than belongs to the world. It is the Messianic kingdom which has been all along the hope of Israel. However much that kingdom might be perverted in the popular mind, it could not fail of its victory. Nothing could mar its eventual triumph. As Abraham could look forward to receive Isaac back even from the grave, so must the true child of Abraham feel at the present moment, as he gazed upon the Victim of Calvary, that death could not arrest that kingdom. It must rise from the grave with a manifold power of blessing. That resurrection would not be merely the individual glorification of the King in His own Person. All nations were to be blessed in its extension; and its effect must be retrospective, so that all past generations should be partakers of its benefit. Whatever might be the form of its manifestation, such a kingdom could not be a kingdom of this world. 'In the days' when

the iron kingdom should be broken, 'the God of heaven' had promised to 'set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed; but it shall break in pieces and consume all' the previous kingdoms of the earth, 'and it shall stand for ever' (Dan. ii. 44).

In thoughts such as these we may well conceive this crucified fanatic suddenly waking up to the falsity of earthly ambitions which had probably fired his wild life. The vision of Mount Moriah, the prophecies of Daniel, which very probably had stimulated him in his rebellion to scorn the thought of death, might well recur to him; and in such a place, at such a moment, amidst the associations of such a Presence, his thoughts, kindled by a ray of Divine inspiration, were melted from the grossness of political faction to rise up in the transcendent adoration of spiritual faith.

He had probably heard the mysterious cry which sought forgiveness for the murderers. That prayer would encourage him to feel that his past life would not exclude him from the pardon which the Son of God invoked. Death shone with life. The word 'forgive' woke a ray of Divine tenderness and power amidst the blackness of the threatening tempest as it howled on every side. He learnt to 'fear God' because the Son of God in such mysterious love was joined with him 'in the same condemnation.' To die with the Innocent, who could plead His Divine Sonship for the guilty, was, indeed, such a dying to sin, that the valley of Achor became a door of hope, and the lustre of eternal love lit up for him the darkness of the grave.

That look which called Peter to penitence conquered a heart which, to human judgment, might have seemed harder still. He felt his need. He could not weigh his sin against the mighty force of redeeming love. Were his sin greater or less, he needed the pardon, and the Royal Pardoner was there. He could only cast himself in helplessness upon the arms of a compassion which he knew—yea, saw and heard—in the fulness of exhaustless power.

The royal pardon cannot be withheld from such a suppliant. 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.' Jesus speaks the word of forgiveness as the Representative of the Father, even as He had pleaded with the Father in the authority of His coequal Sonship. He is a Priest upon His Throne (Zech. vi. 13). He is Himself the Victim, bearing the sins of the world; and the Altar, whereon the fire of the Eternal Spirit sanctifies the oblation, making it acceptable to God; and the Priest of a higher dispensation than that of Aaron—not pouring the blood as a thing of corruption underneath the altar, but bearing it so as to present it to the Father in imperishable life. He is the Right Hand of the Father, enthroning His own humanity in eternal sovereignty; and the express Image of the Father, reigning in His Father's Name; the Incarnate Word of the Father, by whom all mankind shall be judged; the Redeemer of Israel, who is purchasing to Himself from the sinful race of man a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

The penitent thief is the first to claim the virtue of this sacrifice, the reconciliation which this High

Priest brings, the protection of this Divine Sovereign, the glory of this heavenly kingdom. His prayer is that of the Psalmist: 'O remember not the sins and offences of my youth: but according to Thy mercy remember me, O Lord, for Thy goodness' (Ps. xxv. 6).

O Jesu, even so remember me, for Thine own goodness; yea, and none the less because I am a sinner. By reason of my sins I need Thy mercy. Blot out my sins one by one, that every sin which should have turned to my shame may turn to Thy glory as my Redeemer.

My son, thy name is written upon My heart in letters of life. Claim thy portion in My love. Remember Me that thou mayest be true to My holiness, and I will remember thee to deliver thee from thy sin.

O Jesu, blessed be Thy Name for every act of punishment whereby Thou dost teach me my sins. Let me learn the healing power of Thy love in Thy kingdom of grace, that I may find its glorifying power hereafter, and praise Thee with all Thy saints.

2. The Individuality of Pardon.

Jesus speaks to the soul with the tenderness of individual care. He does not administer chastisement promiscuously. So also His welcome is the personal exercise of love, drawing to Himself the soul that has sinned.

In nature God acts by general laws, sending rain upon the evil and the good. His Providence is ever

acting for purposes of beneficence, although men by their evil turn His goodness to their hurt. He reveals His wrath from heaven against all unrighteousness, and the righteous are overwhelmed in the general law of suffering, that they may learn thereby the more fully to take refuge in that personal love which is their portion.

In the kingdom of grace God dispenses His gifts of love to those who individually seek for the blessings of the covenant. His Personal love cannot give itself forth to the unknown. Our own personality, as bearing His image, is the only object on which His mediatorial love can rest. He acts towards us one by one. Such love as His can only be between persons partaking of a common nature. The Father loves the only begotten Son as being of one substance with Himself, and, in the fulness of that Divine love, the Son of man communicates to each one of His members the love of God the Father, lifting us up into the Personal fellowship of the Holy Ghost.

We may be personally unconscious of the love of Jesus, but He is conscious of our personal need of His love. He could not love us if He did not see in us the personal capacity of corresponding with His love. He gives Himself forth in love to us that He may draw us up in love to Himself. Kindliness may deal in generalities according to abstract laws, but love cannot be without the sense of personal reciprocity.

O that we could remember more constantly that personal love wherewith He loves us; that love which is none the less personal by reason of the infinity of the Divine nature, in whose Personal relationships it

has its perfect exercise, and loses none of its personal truth by communication through the Person of the Incarnate God to each one of His members!

'Thou shalt be with Me.' What restfulness did that assurance bring to the suffering malefactor! 'To be with Jesus!' When he saw the suffering of Jesus, he could not doubt that the joy should be proportionate. What could that joy be if it did not include the joy of a true Saviour? He who had prayed that sinners should be forgiven, must find His joy in the reconciliation of sinners. The joy of the marriage supper of the Lamb shall be in presenting the Church unto Himself, sanctified in His own blood—'a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing' (Eph. v. 27).

Surely the words of Jesus fall upon the ear of the penitent with a promise, 'Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.' He who was now so marred by many a wound would be the Centre of joy to every soul that should contemplate Him in the glory soon to be revealed. O! it was a great thing to have learnt that of all the objects of joy which could be found, the world had none to offer which could compare with the presence of Jesus. To be with Jesus! Only those can know what it is to be with Jesus who suffer along with Him. They shall know what it is to be with Jesus in His joy.

O Jesu, dost Thou indeed call me to be with Thee? Let me shrink from nothing which Thy Presence demands from me here on earth, lest I fail of the glory of Thy love which those who suffer along with

Thee shall know. The suffering is mine which Thou dost vouchsafe to share. The glory is Thine which Thou dost vouchsafe to give.

Continue with Me, My son, in all My temptations; so shalt thou be perfected. Thy sin needed the chastisement. My love overflows to thee in the fulness of grace. Count nothing hard that thou canst share with Me in the way of the Cross, and I will hold nothing back that I can make thee to share upon the Mount of God.

O blessed Jesu, to be with Thee! Sweet suffering, sweet death, sweet Paradise!

3. The Immediateness of Acceptance.

'To-day.' O what a day of change—from suffering to joy, from the degradation of a criminal to the exaltation of God's covenant, from the bondage of Satan to the blessedness of Christ's redeemed ones, from sin to holiness!

The thief looked forward to a distant day when the kingdom of Messiah should take the place of the kingdoms of the world. Jesus assures him that the blessing is to be immediate in its communication, although there be yet a future glory of consummation. Jesus will not only remember him in the end; He will watch over him during all the intermediate time. The victory over Satan is complete. Patriarchs, kings, prophets, had gone down to the grave, and had been joined to their fathers in darkness and silence. It was reserved for this penitent

thief to be the first to go down and find the grave lit up with the light of Messiah's presence, and resonant with the benediction of the Word of God. Simeon, ere he died, expressed the peacefulness which came from being assured that Messiah was now born, and therefore the years of expectation could not be many. Now Messiah's death is at hand. The years even of His brief life on earth have reached their close. The day of redemption is come. This poor penitent will be ushered into the grave as a chamber of sacred power, where he will be seen as the first trophy of Christ's victory. Isaiah, who prophesied that Messiah should make His grave with the wicked, will welcome the criminal who comes in close attendance upon the chosen Servant of the Lord.

How suddenly, how unexpectedly, does God show forth in us the fulness of His mercy! We are apt to think that a long time is necessary in order to do great things for God. But a long time is not necessary for God to do great things for us. One day!—yea, one moment! The eye is closed to the dreams of earth, and wakes to the vision of Christ.

How careful we must be to live in the joyous expectation of this vision! We may see it suddenly, but we cannot suddenly learn to rejoice in it. In the case of the penitent thief, as afterwards in that of Saul, there was a wonderful external appearance, tearing them away from their previous habits and thoughts. The hopes and aims of their former life were seen in their worthlessness as belonging to this evil world. The kingdom of Christ shone out before them in heavenly powers. With great convulsion of

their whole nature they were arrested, aroused, so as to be really dead to earth in the consciousness of the higher fellowship with Jesus. The convulsion was not a convulsion arising from any such interior excitement as might stir the outer frame to abnormal action. In both cases the inner soul was abiding in calmness. The outer nature was shaken, not by any human agency, but by stupendous events over which they had no control. But they were not disobedient to the heavenly vision. Their soul acknowledged Jesus in His glory. Amidst the awfulness of outward circumstance they found rest in looking to Jesus.

So did the thief need no further preparation. He had gained the full knowledge of Jesus by faith. This fitted him to contemplate the soul of Jesus in Paradise and find therein his joy. Faith, which goaded the thief and the persecutor to madness against Jesus when blinded by sin, became a power of calmness, in the strength of which death and life, as phenomenally experienced on earth, passed entirely away. To both of them the true life, whether in this world or the next, was simply to be with Jesus.

O Jesu, blessed be Thy Name that Thou hast called me! How long Thou hast called me! How slowly have I answered Thy call! Yet Thou hast called me again and again. Surely with each call the fresh manifestation of Thy grace ought to have wrought in me a perfect transformation long ago. O Lord, I look to Thee. Shake Thou the depth of my heart by any dispensation of Thy love which may best

rouse me to a true obedience; only give grace, that it may be to my salvation, and not to my destruction.

My son, thou must accept My presence with thee at all times. Doubt not My presence, nor My power, nor My love. However miserably thou hast sinned against Me in time past, doubt not the welcome of My love nor the strength of My grace.

Lord Jesu, Thou never changest. Thou art the same from age to age. Still, therefore, would I look to Thee. How ought I to love Thee, who Thyself art Love unchangeable! Let that love change me. Again and again have I felt the manifestations of Thy love with a power ever new. Yet my sluggish heart has again and again fallen back from Thee. For Thee let me henceforth live, however great the suffering may be. With Thee let me die, having Thy presence within me, and death shall be my joy.

MEDITATION LXII.

Paradise.

1. Gratitude for Pardon.

The soul in Paradise must have this for its first thought. Delivered from the body which weighed it down, and kept it under the continual disturbance of evil purposes, the soul wakes up for the first time to a clear consciousness of evil. Even the greatest saints in the flesh cannot have such a consciousness unless it be by some altogether abnormal inspiration, such as is described by St. Paul under the very designation of a rapture into Paradise, of which he could not say whether it were 'in the body or out of the body,' because anyhow the bodily power of suffocating the spiritual sense was superseded.

In the body we can know sin only in its effects. When set free from the body, we shall see the evil of sin, which makes God hate it, so that He suffers those effects to follow. The freed soul will hate sin in like manner. So the penitent thief would attain to a real hatred of his past life, and the greatest saint no less.

This hatred of sin must be growing within us if we are to become truly penitent. Advance in holiness will not suffer the memory of past sin to

float away upon the stream of time. The soul, as it grows in fitness for Paradise, must be acquiring an ever-increasing hatred of its own past sin; not out of selfishness, as fearing that it cannot be forgiven, but by self-identification with the holy nature of God wherein it is regenerated, so that it beholds itself from a point of view external to itself, losing itself in God.

O what must be the gratitude of a soul really finding itself redeemed! O 'the great tribulation' of sin! O the blessedness of feeling the 'robes' of the flesh 'made white in the Blood of the Lamb'! Though those robes be not yet put on again in their brightness, yet to know that all the stains of sin shall be done away by the Blood of the Second Adam which has washed their souls with its refreshing power, and shall purify their bodies with its renewing grace! Well may they cry, 'Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb' (Rev. vii. 10).

'To whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much.' This knowledge of forgiven sin can only be proportionate to the knowledge of the forgiving God. The unbelieving heart blasphemes God for punishing sin, as if God were guilty of it. The forgiven soul knows that its sin is from itself alone, as belonging to the mass of created humanity, and having had a real, personal participation in the primary sin of Adam, our forefather. It sees its sin as being not only hateful, but a very embodiment of hatred, which is only another word for selfishness. It sees God in His truth as being the Eternal Personal

Substantial Love, in whom to live is to share His love, and thus to find the true end of its being, losing itself in God.

How does the soul look back upon its earthly course as one long night of evil, whose only relief has been in any anticipations which God may have vouchsafed of the Day that was at length to shine! And that Day is now shining upon it. Abraham saw that Day afar off. The souls even of those who were by grace the children of the Day could not do more than live by faith, in the hope of its manifestation. The Day-star shone in their hearts; but they had to wait. The darkness was still round about them in the earth, though they were called out of that darkness.

And how often were they deceived, as if the gaslights and manifold illuminations of the world could dispel that Egyptian darkness which was spread over everything round about them! People thought it was the daylight shining. It was difficult not to credit the thought. How often did this false light lead them away from the secrecy of the interior light which God vouchsafes in His sanctuary, and which all must forfeit who go out of the house before the morning!

Now, in Paradise, that light of the Divine Presence shines with nothing to veil it. How are earthly sorrows forgotten in the joy of beholding that brightness! How does the soul look back upon its earthly actions with wonder, hatred, revenge! Yet no need for it now to take revenge! It commits itself in gratitude to the judgment of God. It can

rejoice in adoring God's judgment. It rejoices in the free gift of eternal life, into whose light it is welcomed.

O Jesu, how great should be my gratitude for Thy redeeming love! Deliver me more and more from my sin, that I may be able to contemplate that holy love wherein alone my true life can be found. Reveal Thyself to me more and more. Hasten the day that I may close mine eyes to everything that does not live in Thee, and rejoice that all the deceitful snares of earth are passed away.

My son, if thou wilt be truly thankful to Me for My redemption, take heed that thou detach thyself from every earthly hindrance. If thou wouldst hate the world and all that is in it, flee from the world, and live in the simple joy of My love. Mortify the deeds of the body while thou art yet in the body, so that when thou quittest the body thou mayest find the joy of the Spirit.

Help me, dear Lord, to die to every fleshly imagination. One momentary thrill of thanksgiving to Thee is an earnest of the joy of Paradise. There shall I find Thy goodness giving me life in the midst of death. Teach me to love Thee as Thy redemption demands. Teach me to hate myself as I find myself in the world, that loving Thee, my Creator and Redeemer, I may have a true love for that my better, living self, which is renewed to holiness in the participation of Thy life. Then shall death be changed into life. Then shall life be glorified in God.

2. The Vision of Jesus.

Gratitude can only be towards a person. The want of a true gratitude is what dulls within us the consciousness of a personal God. We are too ready to live in the acceptance of benefits, as if they came from an impersonal Providence, without any sensibility of the acknowledgment which is due to God in return for them.

When the blinding veil of flesh shall be taken away, the soul will perceive the Divine Presence in its personal majesty. The universe of personality will take the place of mere material instrumentalities. The soul which has not cherished fellowship with God will hate God by reason of its inherent evil. The soul which has lived for God will love God, before whose Presence it appears, and will praise Him for the help of His countenance (Ps. xlii. 11).

That Personal Presence, however, cannot be fully known to the finite soul in its own Infinite Substance. The glory of the Man Christ Jesus, in whom the Eternal Godhead dwells, is the manifestation of the Eternal Trinity; and God hath committed all judgment unto the Son, because His human nature fits Him to be the channel of this communication.

Think, then, of the joy of beholding Jesus, the Incarnate God, the ever-blessed Redeemer. That vision will be no mere external vision, such as we may have of earthly things with the outward eye. It will be a transcendent vision, such as to manifest the inmost purposes of His love, the secret actions

whereby His redeeming power was exercised, the moral loveliness, the spiritual vitality, the personal relationship of loving care which belonged to every act of His life on earth. The fleshly Body was a veil hiding these spiritual and personal glories while He was in a state of humiliation. Now the Body glorified is an instrument of manifestation; for His Body in its perfected condition contains upon itself the mark of every act and word and thought of love which He wrought below, and these, as they were wrought in the power of the Holy Ghost, so also live eternally in the glory of the Divine truth. Then His imperishable acts constitute the living glory of His Manhood, streaming forth from Him in radiating power.

To behold Him, therefore, is to behold the true glory of His blessed life, the motives, the whole energy of moral character which came forth in His conduct day by day—to behold this, not as a retrospect, but as an active reality, abiding in all the tenderness of human love and the majesty of Divine glory. To see Jesus as He shows Himself to souls in Paradise, is to realize the perfection of that love wherewith He ever contemplates each soul that He has redeemed.

Surely, as the soul thus contemplates Jesus, it must gain a continual progress in Divine life and love by drinking into itself the Divine sweetness. So do we pray, 'Let light perpetual shine upon them.' That vision cannot be ineffectual towards those who share it. What may be the capacities of the soul to respond to such a vision we cannot say.

We may feel sure that the soul that has such a vision cannot stagnate beneath its brightness.

We cannot tell what the joy of such a vision shall be to souls who are prepared for it. But we can prepare. The discipline of life, the gifts of grace, the sacraments of the Church, the exercises of prayer, meditation, and praise, the work of faith, the labour of love, the patience of hope, must be preparing us. We must try to see Jesus by all these means of approach to His living truth. It is of little value to know exactly the pictorial surroundings of the life of Jesus. It is of unspeakable value to search into the living sunlight of righteousness with which His Heart was ever aglow, that we may catch some of its radiance. 'In Thy light we shall see light.' One moment of the vision, if it fill the heart, can do wonders now as it did for the dying malefactor. But it must be welcomed according to the dispensation of His love. We are not to think that we can claim it whenever we like. If we respond not to it at once, respond to all its constant calls that we may grow in holiness by its watchful observance, we must surely expect that in the end we shall not fear God, even though we be in the same condemnation of death. The death of Christ will not speak to us in death, if His life does not speak to us in life.

O Jesu, make the light of Thy Presence to shine into the inmost depth of my soul. Let the fire of Thy love kindle my dull heart in fellowship with Thine. Thy love has power to conform me to Thy likeness.

Open Thou the eyes of my understanding, that every impulse of my nature may feel the transport of Thy spiritual beauty.

My son, if thou wilt come apart from the world I will show Myself to thee, even as to My three Apostles on the Holy Mount. The world knoweth Me not, and cannot know Me. If thou wilt seek Me truly with all diligence, thou shalt gain that knowledge of Me upon the earth whereby thou mayest be fitted to attain to the vision of Paradise wherein Mine elect rejoice to rest.

O Jesu, I refuse no mortification of the outward sense if my soul thereby may attain to behold Thee. Cleanse my heart from every desire which may interfere with Thy perfect adoration. The toils of earth shall be full of repose, and the rest of Paradise shall compass me even here on my pilgrimage if I may but see Thee. Alas, alas! each day is lost on which I do not gain some clearer sight of Thee. Each day of anguish brings Paradise more near as it leads me onward in Thy blessed contemplation.

3. The Expected Consummation.

Backward with gratitude! Upward with delight! Onward with confidence! Such is the gaze of the soul in Paradise rejoicing in the light which Jesus gives.

Truly the judgment is in store! Yet does the soul fear no evil which knows itself to be living in

the love of Jesus. It must take up its body with all the marks of what it has done in the world, that it may receive the things which it has done in the body, whether they be good or bad.

Filled with the love of Jesus by the quickening power of the Holy Ghost, it can no longer shrink from that mysterious suffering whereby the vileness of the outer flesh shall be done away, and the inner principles of life be conformed to the very image of the Lord it loves. The blood of Jesus shall strengthen it, and purge out of it whatever may yet be lingering so as to defile. Every act that has been done in the power of grace shall be made to shine out with the righteousness of the living God, in whose strength it was accomplished. Its acts of holiness, done, however unworthily, in the power of love, shall rise up in the glory of Him who taught them, and glow with a worthiness of reward altogether beyond the feebleness of the human effort.

Wonderful amazement of the soul in the judgment! Our Lord tells us that it is more than the soul can believe. 'When saw we Thee? When did we minister to Thee? Now we see Thee, but on earth, alas, alas! we might have seen Thee, and we saw Thee not.'

Think how the soul looks forward, ready to bear in the body the severity of the judgment, because it knows that its very body shall be glorified by the security of the Divine love; and as it has lived in Paradise in the vision of Jesus, it will rise so as in its very flesh to see God with an intensity of power beyond what Paradise could know.

On earth we shrink from sufferings which at the utmost are very small, because we see not the glorious issue of the beatific vision for which these sufferings in the flesh are preparing us. The soul in Paradise, united with Jesus in true fellowship of life, and seeing Him with that interior vision which the Holy Ghost gives, long for the consummation. 'Lord, how long?' That is its cry. However sweet the interval of repose, yet the glory that is in store leads it still to look onward. Amidst the perfection of Jesus, it feels the imperfection of its own capacities. Without the body it cannot have the fulness of its desire. It shall receive the reward of all that Jesus has wrought in it, when Jesus shall be glorified in the bodies of all His risen saints. It feels the power of sin still holding it back while the body remains in death, and it will welcome all the searching severity of the consuming fire of God's Presence, that it may regain a body over which, when thus made fit for the Master's use, sin and death shall no longer have any hold.

'When I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it' (Ps. xvii. 16). Think of the longing of the soul in Paradise. O let me live even now in the anticipation thereof! Why do I now forget the judgment, and fall into sins for which I must then give account? Why do I not now rather take vengeance upon myself for my sins, since small acts of self-judgment, wrought upon earth by the power of grace, will avail to save me from great and terrible acts of punishment if I leave my sins to be judged of the Lord?

O Jesu, strengthen me with the contemplation of Thy sweet majesty, that I may look forward to behold Thee when Thou shalt come to judge the secrets of all men, and may judge myself now so that I may find the fulness of the remission of sins which Thou hast provided.

My son, seek to live with Me on earth, looking forward to be with Me in Paradise. As thou seekest, so shalt thou find. I will show Myself to thee more and more, strengthening thee to struggle against sin. So will I welcome thy soul to repose in My joy when the struggle is over. So will I preserve thee from all evil in the day of account, and thou shalt find mercy prevailing over judgment. Why wilt thou not look to Me with more confidence? Look to Me, for every look of love shall find the reward of love from Me in the day of Mine appearing. Did I not hide Myself now, thou couldst then have no reward. Cling to Me with faith. Thou shalt find Paradise to be very close to thee. Yea, thou shalt be caught up thither in many an ineffable transport, if it be needful to strengthen thee. Thy death shall be dear to Me, when I will welcome thee to Mine embrace. I know the glory which I have prepared for thee in the judgment, although thou knowest it not. Withstand the enemy bravely now as My love inspires, that in that day thou mayest be able to stand in the power of My might.

O Lord Jesu, Thou hast caused me to be baptized into Thy death, that being buried with Thee I might find a Paradise upon the earth. In Thy death let me abide. O let me be dead to every earthly thought, that when I am absent from the flesh I may be present with Thee. Let Thy Presence strengthen me in life, and welcome me in death, and make me triumphant in the judgment. Let my whole being be fixed upon Thy contemplation, that I may suffer by Thy grace, repose in Thy gaze, and rise again to Thy glory. We know not yet what we shall be; but, Lord Jesu, Thou art He whom my soul loveth, and I long to be like Thee, and see Thee as Thou art. For Thee was my whole nature formed, both body and soul. In Thee alone can I find rest. Lord, how long must I wait? When shall I be perfected? Come to me, and tarry not! Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

MEDITATION LXIII.

The Parting of the Garments.

And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments among them, casting lots: and they sat and watched him there. — St. Matt. xxvii. 35, 36.

And they crucify him, and part his garments among them, casting lots upon them, what each should take. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.—St. Mark xv. 24, 25.

And parting his garments among them, they cast lots. —St. Luke xxiii. 34.

The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith,

They parted my garments among them,
And upon my vesture did they cast lots.

These things therefore the soldiers did. —St. John xix. 23, 24.

1. The Nakedness of the Cross.

Jesus must put aside all the tokens of the Fall. Coming into the world, He clothed Himself with the likeness of our sinful flesh. Leaving the world, He must go forth in the simplicity of His own Divine purity.

Was not His Body clothed with a real dignity far exceeding the purple of emperors, in that He was covered with His own Blood? He would come from Edom with garments stained in Blood—Blood shed for His enemies; their blood, because it was

the blood common to their sinful humanity, and their sins had necessitated the Bloodshedding, His own Blood clothing Him with glory, for it had the life of God. O the dyed garments of humanity in which He is crucified! The wounds are the result of the Fall, but the wounds are glorious as the wounds of a Redeemer.

He must, indeed, have no earthly clothing to hide the glorious sacrifice which He offers unto God. He must bear the shame of seeming nakedness in the eyes of men, but He is clothed with the purity of Divine perfection, the mystery of meritorious suffering in the sight of angels.

What though the eyes of men in their blindness could not read the Divine glory of those wounds! That mangled Form must be exposed to view, for from its contemplation, sufferers through all successive ages shall learn to take courage. Not only shall they learn. Those wounds shall live with glorious power. If a virtue went forth from the hem of His outer garment, much more shall virtue go forth to cleanse, to nourish, to invigorate, many that are bleeding with the wounds of sin, the onflow of corrupt passions. Saints shall know what it is by those wounds to be fed, inebriated, and delighted, nourished in holiness, transported in ecstasy of Divine enjoyment, and gladdened with the fulness of Divine love.

He must offer upon the Cross nothing that belongs to our fallen condition save that human substance wherewith He has clothed Himself so as to make it share His own communicated life.

'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord' (Job i. 21). So spake the Patriarch. Jesus came in the seeming nakedness of fallen man, but He was clothed with the glory of God. He dies in seeming nakedness as the Victim of the Fall, but He is still clothed with the glory of God.

So, too, is His Church feeble with the seeming nakedness and manifold wounds of earth, as if it were only itself of the earth. Yet the glory of God clothes her, for she is His Body. The heavenly Jerusalem is clothed with 'the glory of God and of the Lamb.' O that we had eyes to see that glory wherein we live! We must see it by faith, that we may act true to its requirements. We gain not any development of glory by any clothing with which earthly dignity may make the Church conformable to its own conventionalities. We gain a true share in that clothing of glorious life by our identification with the wounds of the Crucified. Other clothing, if it be given Him, must be left in the grave. The clothing of His Passion shall rise in all the brightness of His triumph.

Let us not fear any nakedness of poverty, shame, reproach; the absence of any worldly gifts, genius, learning, power, which may make the Cross of Christ at times less contemptible! The more the world denudes, the more will the power of God surround us with the heavenly radiance of His indwelling grace.

O Jesu, who for my sake didst bear the nakedness of the Cross, grant that I may put away all thoughts of worldly splendour, and know no clothing but Thy grace and truth. Alas, how do the seeming merits of earth lead my desires astray! Yet they cannot hide the shame of my sinfulness. Thy grace alone can hide my shame, yea, and transfigure me with the fulness of Thy glory.

My son, thou must gladly take all spoiling of thy goods if thou wouldst know the blessedness of those riches which cannot be taken away. Beware, as Satan strips thee of everything, that he make not manifest the shame of thine own earthliness, but the grace of My Passion which I bid thee share. Blessed are My saints who are so divested of themselves in penitence, that when they are stripped of all things, My righteousness is brought to sight in all their sufferings, and their own sinfulness is found no more.

So be it, blessed Jesu! Thou hast borne my sins. Take away everything that by hiding my sins can make me sin the more. Grant me to share Thy wounds, that in the fellowship of Thy sufferings I may learn the power of Thy Resurrection.

2. The Four Parts.

The soldiers who crucified Christ represent the world in which His Church has still to suffer. The four parts represent the four parts of the world. May we suppose that it sets forth the appropriation

of various elements of Christian truth by different portions, or ages, or dispositions of Christendom, using them for worldly purposes in separation, and not for the glory of Christ by their combined seemliness? So the head-gear may be the truth of the Divine Nature in speculative contentiousness; the tunic, the outward ritual; the girdle, the formal discipline; the sandals, the Christian character in the earthly morality of its walk.

Alas, that any should be found even now, glad, like those uninstructed soldiers, to make gain out of the clothing of Jesus, the Church, which is His Body,—in its spiritual essence, His Body suffering wounds; in its outward manifestation, the clothing of His Body, supernaturally living with His own true life while He wears it, but ready to be torn off from Him as a lifeless, empty show, unless it really continue in the mysterious participation of His life!

Woe be to those who strip Christ of His glory, not recognizing Him as the living Principle within the Church! The Church seems to them a mere web of worldliness that they may cut up according to their own fancy, taking various parts of the Christian scheme which may suit their tastes or their convenience, content to give up the rest, quite unaware of any hidden virtue of Christ.

Virtue came forth from this clothing to heal the faithful. We must cherish faith in Christ's presence in all the details of Christian life. So shall virtue come forth to heal us of our corruption. We must recognize Christ in the indivisible life of His Being—the ointment of the Divine fragrance poured

out upon His 'Head,' His Divine Person, and running down upon the 'Beard' of His humanity, and that Beard flowing down over the neck-band of the Communion of Saints, His Church, which clothes Him and is one with Him. His people are not, as under the Old Covenant, a separable clothing. They are a true part of Himself, and so they share His unction. His human nature hides the original difference between Himself and them, as the Beard hides the line of separation between the neck and the vestment that surrounds it.

O Jesu, let me ever be with Thee. Surely Thou dost clothe Thyself with Thy people, not as a garment to be worn for a short time and cast away. Blessed saints, who, as the garment touching Thine adorable Person, are really impregnated with Thy virtue! So let me abide with Thee, that Thy healing power may through me come forth to others. Let no malice of Satan tear me away from Thee. I know that he cannot tear me away if I abide under the influence of Thy holy unction. Let not my patience wear out, but grant me so to abide in Thine anointing with perseverance unto the end, that when Thou comest in Thy glory Thou mayest bring me with Thyself, and in me be glorified. Then shall Thy train fill the Temple. Then shall the communion of Thy saints be resplendent with the lustre of Godhead which none can take from Thee.

My son, if thou will remember that thou art but a worthless thing of thine own self, and that thy life comes wholly from Me, then shalt

thou continue uninjured; but if thou cease to seek that virtue which comes to thee because of My touch while I wear thee as My clothing, acting through thee according to My will, then thou wilt find that thou shalt perish quickly as a rag of rottenness.

O Lord, I desire to feel my own nothingness, clinging to Thee in simple conformity to Thy will. Wonderful it is that Thou shouldest have called me so near to Thee, and that Thou deignest to act under the garb of my unworthiness. O let me praise Thee. Yea, as Thy garment became shining more than any fuller on earth can whiten, so shalt Thou be manifested in radiant power in all Thy saints. Thy power, Thy wisdom, Thy love, shall be their life. O in that day grant that I may be found amongst them!

3. The Seamless Robe.

The inner robe of Jesus was without seam, woven from the top throughout. It seems to represent the Divine life of His Church. It was woven from the top because it had its origin from God the Father.

The robe of the High Priest was thus to be woven without seam. It therefore helps to set forth our Lord as the High Priest of His Church, bearing His people upon Himself in the fellowship of Divine life while He goes forth to minister on their behalf.

How terrible it is to think of a coarse Syrian soldier appropriating the dress which Jesus had worn, and wearing it in proud satisfaction after taking part in nailing Jesus to the Cross!

Is not this what the power of the world does, when it seeks to utilize the Divine power of the Church for its own aggrandizement?

Alas, how have men made the very unity of the Church a ground of separation! The Church must be one. Various soldiers who have crucified Jesus by some false doctrine claim to own His robe as if there were no other Church but that in which they can act with power.

True, the robe is valueless if it be rent. But it is valueless if it be worn by some earthly leader of a denomination, instead of clothing the Body which has Christ for its only Head.

The soldiers cast lots whose it should be. The robe belongs of right to Christ alone. Whoever takes it, wins it not by any more right than others, but by the chance of popular favour. To estimate the truth of any denomination of Christians by numerical preponderance is making the possession of the robe depend upon a lottery.

A sect may have its unity, but however large it may be, it has not the Divine life. The Church, the Communion of Saints, is the living multitude of His people, abiding in unity as a robe worn by Himself, and living with His indwelling Presence, while He, as the only Head, acts through them though unseen.

O what miserable pride is it, to boast of power in the Church of God! Christ by wicked hands is crucified and slain, more terribly by the pride of party spirit than by these soldiers.

Have we not here a great symbol of the anti-

christ of the last days? He will draw all the Church after Him in the great apostasy, walk boastfully in the robe which Christ wore, while Christ is hanging upon the Cross, apparently conquered altogether by the world, which has stripped Him of His raiment and left Him to die. But no! The outward clothing of the humanity may be parted amongst many. The inward robe of the Divine life cannot be rent. Amidst all schisms the life of the Church must still be one.

Men may boast the unity of compulsion or the unity of comprehension. Neither of them can retain the Divine life within the Church. That unity of life can only be the result of the organism of the Body of Christ whereby all His people are gathered into one, having the Headship of His own Divine Personal Sovereignty acting through them all.

O Jesu, grant unto all Thy people to be so united together that Thou mayest live and act in the midst of them. Vainly we claim the Divine life if we think to use it without Thee. Thou wert stripped of Thy clothing and scourged and crucified! And now Thou art ascended to the Right Hand of the Father, that Thou mayest take a clothing unto Thyself, even Thine elect people gathered from among men, and knit together in the unity of a spiritual life by the Divine power coming from above! Surely Thou art in the midst of us, though we see Thee not. We cannot be Thy robe unless Thou art truly wearing us as Thine own. Aaron was stripped of his garments that they might be put upon Eleazar his son; but Thou, O Lord, canst

leave Thy place to no other. Thy priests shall minister in Thy Name until the fulness of Thy stature be attained in the perfecting of Thy saints. But none can minister with Thy life unless Thou be with them. As Thou hast called me, though so unworthy, into this priesthood, grant that I may always remember that I am but one of the bands whereby Thy Body is acting; and the life is Thine, and Thou dost act through me according to Thy will.

My son, feel thine emptiness and thou shalt find My fulness. My strong Arm shall act through thee to accomplish that which thou thyself wouldst not dare to hope. Only remember to act with faith; remember the unseen reality of My presence.

Dear Lord, how wonderful is Thy goodness! Bind me to Thyself closer and closer, that Thy power may be manifest even under the veil of my unworthiness. Show forth even in me Thy glorious power. But not in me alone. Show Thyself forth in all Thy whole Church, that we all may shine, and Thy glory at length may so shine through us that we may be lost in the all-encompassing radiance of Thy manifestation.

My son, remember that none can have their place in My seamless robe unless the unity of the Spirit poured out upon Myself flow over all and bind them in indissoluble life. Ye must have fellowship one with another if ye would have life from Me. Endeavour, therefore, to keep the unity of the Spirit, that there may be no rent in My virtue. 'This is My command-

ment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. So shall ye continue in My love.'

Alas, O Lord! I am too apt to think of myself, instead of losing every thought of self in the consciousness of participating with all Thy saints in the glory of Thine indwelling Presence. Let me cherish this living unity wherein alone Thou canst acknowledge us. Such unity inspired, indwelt, by Thee shall make Thy glory manifest, and fill our hearts with joy.

MEDITATION LXIV.

The Third Word from the Cross.

But there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold, thy son!—St. John xix. 25, 26.

1. The Personal Relationship.

Our Lord addresses the Blessed Virgin by a title of respect rather than of relationship, for He did not receive His Personality by being born on earth, but by eternal generation from the Father. The relationship of Creator to creature is from eternity. The relationship of Son to mother sprang up in time, although it is taken up into the eternal.

He speaks not as a son who is leaving his mother with anxiety as to her future well-being, although confiding in the providence of God. He speaks as God, who, although His personal manifestation will no longer be present to her, will still Himself watch over her. As God, He is the Author of all natural relationships in the world at large; and now He is constituting fresh relationships. The relationship of mother and son, which will bind together the Blessed Virgin and St. John, is no merely nominal relationship in which they acquiesce. It is not a relationship of adoption. It is a relationship as real

as that which springs from natural consanguinity, for it is created in the fulness of Divine power by Him who is the Author of nature.

The title by which Jesus addressed her was also significant of her prophetic relationship to the great event of Calvary. It was the seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head. There were many mothers in Israel, but she was the woman who stood alone in the world as the chosen channel through which the Redeemer should come into the world.

Had Jesus called her 'Mother,' the title would have implied nothing more than the inferior love which a child has to a parent. The word 'Woman' gathered up into itself that love toward the human race which called forth the original promise that the seed of the woman should be the Conqueror. It summed up within itself the predestinating love whereby God from everlasting determined that the Divine life should come amongst men.

The woman was to be the passive instrument whereby this new life should come. Eve was so called as being the mother of all living. Had she not fallen, the eternal life would have entered into the world from the Lord, through her maternity, as the mother of the life. By her fall she could only be the mother of that which was dead. Maternity now spoke only of the transmission of death. The Lord of life bringing life into the world became the Child of the woman, but she did not bring forth His life as if it were inherent in herself. She could only transmit that life by communicating to Him

of her deadness. The Second Adam was her Child, the Lord of life; but the Second Eve had to be formed from Him, the Jerusalem above, formed of His human substance, and therefore living with His Divine life, so as to be the mother of us all.

When Satan heard that word 'Woman' spoken by the lips of Jesus, it was to him a word of terror, for it was the word which rang so terribly through the sentence of his doom. 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel' (Gen. iii. 15). It was, therefore, fitting that this name should be uttered.

Her own name, Mary, would have spoken to Hebrew ears of the fall which she inherited; but the title of 'Woman' spoke of the glorious predestination of womankind to which she had attained. The Cross gathered up into itself all the bitterness of her exile (as Marah), and opened the way to the pleasures (as Naomi) at God's right hand for evermore (Ps. xvi. 12), where the Lamb's Bride should find the promised glory.

O Jesu, Thou speakest to Thy mother in the fulness of the Divine love wherewith Thou hast predestinated her from all eternity. Thine unchangeable promise shines through the darkness of Thy Passion as the strength of her soul. Grant me in like manner to stand by Thy Cross and hear the word of Thy love. Blessed is the Cross whereon Thou dost bruise the serpent's head.

My son, stand boldly by My Cross, even

as My mother and My beloved disciple stood. Let thy whole heart participate in My Cross, in the full consciousness of My power, and My Cross shall be to thee an instrument of victory according to the fulness of My grace.

O Jesu, it is hard to stand by Thy Cross, but it is harder to know the bitterness of the world without it. Thou callest us one by one into relationship with Thine own self. Help me to feel Thine individual love calling me. So shall the bitterness of earthly life by Thy Cross be made sweet as the ways of pleasantness and peace, whereby Thy redeemed rejoice to be near Thee.

2. The Human Race.

In thus addressing His Blessed Mother, Jesus seems to speak to all the human race as personified in womanhood. Woman is the ideal of human nature in its abstract, as man is the concrete expression of human nature in its personality. Therefore the man is by the woman, and the Son of man is prophesied as being the Seed of the woman. The human nature which He assumes by the power of the Holy Ghost is void of all originative impulse. The thoughts of man's heart, springing up from beneath, are only evil continually (Gen. vi. 5). The will of Jesus acts with the power of the Holy Ghost, corresponding in all things with the will of God whereby it is moved. His created will is true to the impulse of the Creator, not only by submission of obedience, but by perfection of Divine truth.

His created will never chooses perversely anything that is at variance with the Divine Will, although it may naturally turn to many objects which it has to surrender because they are not according to the Divine Will. By reason of its very goodness it chooses that which is good in the order of nature, even when the order of redemption requires the choice to be set aside. There is no variance of will, but variance of circumstance. His human will is guided by the Divine Will, both to choose what in itself is best, and to surrender it by reason of eternal necessities which make the opposite to be better.

There is in Christ, therefore, no human personality, seeking its own and acting with independence of the Divine Will.

So in the elect humanity which is formed out of the Body of Christ by participation of His death, as Eve from sleeping Adam, there is likewise no personal originality of will, but an entire conformity to the will of Christ, the Head. Such must be the life of the Bride of Christ. Eve acted upon her own judgment independently of her husband, and so she was deceived; but the law of nature is that the wife be subject to her own husband in everything. So the Bride of Christ is the elect humanity, looking up to Him as her Lord and her Head, and having no thought but what comes from Him. The union of the elect race with Jesus is not a mere alliance of agreement, but a union of submissive nature with a controlling personality. 'The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church:

and He is the Saviour of the Body' (Eph. v. 23). We see, then, why Christ, addressing the elect humanity —the Church of all future time—His Bride, when He speaks from the Cross, should use this word 'Woman.' 'She shall be called Woman (*Ishah*), because she was taken out of man' (*Ish*). The title is taken from the original relationship of wedlock from which mankind is sprung, and that relation must be restored in its perfection if His salvation is to be effectual. The voice of the Bride is ever speaking to her Lord, as Mary spoke to the angel whom God sent, 'Be it unto me according to thy word.' Her name is lost in the name of her Lord; for 'this is the Name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness;' and so is she called also, because her whole life is to act by His all-quickening will and sovereignty (Jer. xxxiii. 16). Her children rise up from generation to generation and call her blessed. O yes! and her Husband shall rise up in the day of His glory, and He praiseth her (Prov. xxxi. 28). She, like Him, was despised and rejected of men (Isa. liii. 3), but in the end her praise shall not be of men, but of God (Rom. ii. 29).

So does our Lord seem to speak from the Cross to His Church, the elect humanity, to be united with Himself in the eternal relationship of the Divine espousal.

O Jesu, let me ever be dependent upon Thee, resting in Thy love as befits Thy Church, Thy Bride. Let me die to that natural will which stirs me to the mere actions of men, that I may bring forth fruit unto

Thee, as, by the inspiration of Thy Divine Will, Thy Church is called of Thee to show forth Thy glory.

O My son, if thou will lose all thought of thine own self, then shalt thou indeed be partaker of My life and glory. Think not to have any relationship with Me by reason of natural actions which mark thee off from other men. Lose thyself in the Communion of Saints. So shalt thou find the Spirit of life whereby My Church is sanctified operative in thyself for the accomplishment of all whereby I may be glorified. Yea! when I speak to My Bride, I speak to thee.

O Lord Jesu, grant me always to hear the sweet Voice of Thy tender love. Thou speakest to me from the Cross, and whenever that Cross rises up before me with some renewal of Thy Passion, Thy Voice as of old comes to me in the bitterness of my natural heart, and I recognize Thy call sweeter in sorrow than any charm of the world in time of joy. Indeed, I would lose myself in the multitude of the redeemed. Thy Voice speaks to all, to each, with the blessedness of a new life, 'Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away.'

3. The Permanence of the Incarnation.

The Blessed Virgin is bidden to behold her son in the disciple whom Jesus loved. Jesus was going away, but He would still be here. He would be present in His members to the end of time. This phrase does not imply any mere substitution of the

disciple for the Master, of an adopted son for a real Son, of a creature for the Creator. St. John was to be recognized in a perfect identity of life with Him whose place he was to take. It was the first accomplishment of the appointment divinely given, 'He that receiveth you receiveth Me.' No empty fellowship of earth, however intimate the affection might be, could take the place of that substantive fellowship of supernatural life wherein the blessed mother was knit unto her Son. The fellowship of grace which bound her to Jesus would be really continued in the ministry of grace which St. John would exercise in His Name.

The announcement was as wonderful as the first announcement that she should be herself a Virgin Mother. It required as great faith on her part to accept this as to accept that.

The declaration was the first utterance of His Divine self-communicative life. Doubtless she had been prepared for it by many previous teachings, as the Apostles had been prepared by previous teachings to understand the words which He spake, 'This is My Body.'

Now, however, the time was come. The dying Lord would leave His Apostles behind Him in the world, and would work truly by them. Their work should be truly His own. They should be ministers, not of the letter in earthly emptiness, but of the Spirit in the fulness of power.

He would be with His Apostles, and He makes a beginning by declaring the truth in the one Apostle. He would show the individual completeness of His

Presence with each, by setting forth St. John, as He showed the unity of His Church, complete in each of the twelve foundations, by setting forth St. Peter.

Thus would His Presence be with His Church by an Apostolical ministry of real spiritual power until the end of time. 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world' (Matt. xxviii. 20). The Church was to recognize the Seed of the woman triumphing from generation to generation. If Christ had left the world altogether by dying, nothing could have taken His place. In His own Person He does indeed go away, but He leaves His Apostles to minister in His Person (2 Cor. ii. 10), as He assured them that He sent them forth to accomplish, with the full virtue of His Name and Holy Spirit, the commission which the Father had entrusted to Himself.

So truly is the Church the Body of Christ, and every member of Christ's Body has Jesus truly dwelling within him as his life, for the purposes, whatever they may be, which each member of the Body of Christ has to do. 'We are all the Body of Christ, and every one of us members in particular' (1 Cor. xii. 27).

So let us learn beside the Cross of Christ to appreciate the glory of Christ's mystical Body. The Blessed Virgin was not to rely upon the relationship which had hitherto bound her in such close personal affection to Jesus. She was to look to the Apostle whom He left behind, and, through the ministry of the Spirit, she was to find that that old affection was not set aside by death, but glorified by grace.

O blessed Jesu, help me to feel how near Thou art to me, and to use the ministry of Thy Church with that devout affection which I would give to Thine own Self.

Be thou ever watchful to seek Mine own true Presence in all the means of grace. Hear My Voice speaking to thee in those whom I send to thee. And since I have called thee to the dignity of Priesthood, and the responsibility of Religious Profession, take heed to remember that I am acting through thy ministrations. Speak and act as I would speak and act in thy place.

Alas, blessed Jesu, that I should be so unworthy of this heavenly dignity! O let me humble myself at the foot of Thy Cross to die with Thee to the world, that I may live in the power of Thy grace, one for evermore with Thine own Self, who now art dead unto the world; yea, one with Thine own Self, who livest in me by the power of an endless life. By the power of the Holy Ghost Thou didst take an earthly life from Thy Blessed Mother. By the power of the Holy Ghost Thou callest me to share Thy heavenly life.

MEDITATION LXV.

Filial Devotion to the Church of Christ.

Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own *home*.—St. John xix. 27.

1. Love to the Saints.

Our Lord Jesus bids St. John regard the Blessed Virgin as his own mother. So must we look upon those who are near to Jesus as being in the same way near to ourselves.

The Blessed Virgin is a type of the Church. The earthly Jerusalem and the earthly mother are types of the heavenly Jerusalem, the mother of us all. We must regard the Church as our mother, the channel of our new life. Though as an Apostle St. John personally represents Christ, yet being an individual Christian he must recognize himself as being born in the heavenly Jerusalem, and having his claim to fellowship with Christ based not upon individual fitness, but upon this regenerate sonship in the Communion of Saints.

The Church is no mere imaginary abstraction, but the organism of Divine vitality, having no head but Christ, living with His life-blood, so that Christ is formed in all of her children by the power of the Holy Ghost.

For this Church we have to live upon the earth. The Church is the extension of the Body of Christ, His very substance communicated by grace to all that are called to share His life, as the Blessed Virgin was the mother from whose substance the Body of Christ was taken, so that He shared her earthly life. From this organized extension of the Body of Christ we individually receive our life, sharing with her the Resurrection-life of the humanity and the sanctifying life of the Godhead. We are not to think of ourselves as constituting the Body of Christ in such a way that the Body of Christ is incomplete without us. We must not forget that the City of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, is an organism antecedent to our own personal regeneration, complete in its measure as each successive age goes by, although we constitute, by collective completeness of all ages, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, which is gradually attaining its heavenly consummation as the Body of Christ, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all; and so we shall come at length to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (Eph. iv. 13).

How tenderly did the beloved disciple accept the mother of Christ as his own mother for the future, taking her to share his home! So must we love the Church of Christ with a true filial affection, and care for her well-being with an individual solicitude.

His own mother after the flesh was there, the sister of the Virgin Mother. The ties of nature and of grace were not at variance. We know how Salome was intent upon all the duties of honour that could

be paid to the dead Body of Christ. We may be quite sure she was equally careful of the living memorial of the dear Lord who now came to dwell under her roof. Duty lovingly given to the Church of God will hallow and strengthen the ties of natural kindred. It will not unfit us to perform those duties.

We must welcome the Church into our own house, and feel that all that we do must be done in a filial, not a servile spirit. So shall our religious duties elevate our daily life. O happy household where the saints of God find their refreshment in this weary world! If every duty of Christian piety be done in the Name of Jesus, as though Jesus acted in us, to those whom He leaves behind, as claiming our affection because they are near and dear to Him, how shall we find the Communion of Saints in this lower world preparing us for the brighter joys, when Jesus shall welcome us and them to His heavenly home!

O Jesu, let my heart be drawn to all the interests of Thy holy Church as Thou Thyself regardest them. Never let me regard Thy Church with the mere consideration of earthly necessity. Ever let me act in Thy Name, and with Thy life, and feel Thee to be truly living in Thy saints, whoever they may be, to whom Thou callest me to minister, and in whatsoever way.

My son, be thou My representative in all thy thoughts and actions, and I will be thy Life and Strength.

O Lord, let me not think that anything which I have is mine own. All, all is Thine. Away with

any ties which would hold me back from making my natural surroundings a true home of piety where Thy Church may dwell! Thy Church in all her necessities is the true power which alone can enrich me by her hallowing presence. Let me be conformed in everything to Thy will, and cherish all that belongs to Thee with Thy true love.

2. The Memory of the Cross.

All associations in the Name of Christ are hallowed by the remembrance of the Cross. If we have shared together in the Passion of Jesus, we learn the power of that Passion to separate us from the world of perishing life, and to reveal to us the mysteries of the eternal kingdom. All the saints are knit together only by the bond of a Saviour's sufferings. Every redeemed soul while bowing before the Cross in penitence learns to say, 'My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.' There we learn from what He has saved us, and by what price. There we learn our own value in His sight. There we learn to value others even as He valued them, 'who loved me,' and gave Himself for me;' and as for me, so also for them. The souls of others become dear to us since for them Christ died. The Church which He has purchased with His own Blood must appeal to our love as nothing else can do.

The Church, His Bride, is no mere scheme of outward amelioration for the world. It does not represent an enterprise of human effort triumphing by the forces which it combines for the accomplish-

ment of a transcendental hope. It is a real living entity, substantially developed from the Being of the Incarnate God by the mysterious virtue whose fragrance the sacred Passion makes to spread with self-communicating power on all around. In this Church is consummated the glory of God, the salvation of man, the sanctification of every individual saint. None can add to its treasures by any excellence that they can bring. They can only call forth into manifestation, each one by some special participation in the Passion, those infinite merits which are inherent in the Crucified Saviour, and stream forth with vitalizing energy to strengthen His members in their various sufferings, and crown them with the special reward which they shall win.

To have stood together beside the Cross of Jesus is the great bond of holy memory. That memory hallows the home where we may dwell. Rather, indeed, that memory is the true home where loving hearts find joy in experiences of redeeming love which have been shared in common.

To come away from the Cross with hearts conscious of the intense power of the sacred Passion as hallowing some sorrow that is shared in common, is a supernatural union which transforms all earthly relationships into heavenly realities. It is an indissoluble bond. Truly is it exhibited in the changeless relationship of mother and son. Truly is it set forth in the mother of Jesus and the disciple whom He loved, to be continued in various degrees by His members from age to age, to be the solemnizing joy of all the ministrations of the Holy Ghost,

whereby every priest shall take his part in ministering from age to age to the great mother, the heavenly Salem, in her pilgrimage of earthly toil.

O how we need a heart like that mother who stood so bravely beside the Cross, if we would truly offer to God the sufferings of the Church of each successive day! She looked up with confidence that the Passion of her Son would be victorious. We must look up in like manner. The Church of every age has to plead the Passion of Christ not only in historical retrospect or sacramental mystery. Our Eucharists must express themselves in the joyousness with which we accept whatever portions of those sufferings may be vouchsafed to us. Still must the wrath of the dragon continue against the woman, the elect humanity, the Church of Christ, as he 'goes forth to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ' (Rev. xii. 17). The heart must not fail, though it seem that all our hopes are whelmed in death. In the home of the disciple whom Jesus loved, we, like Mary, must wait patiently for the Resurrection; the triumph not of earth but of heaven, not visible to earthly sense but powerful in heavenly truth.

O Jesu, may the memory of Thy Passion be ever present to my heart! I am content to wait in hiddenness until the day shall come, if only I may abide in the ministration of Thy love. No triumph would I desire for Thy Church on earth but the triumph of suffering. Thou comest quickly, though to us the days

of Thine absence seem to be long. Only suffer not my faith to fail. Still let me abide among the faithful few, treasuring the contemplation of Thy death. So by Thy grace shalt Thou fit me to contemplate the glory of Thy life.

My son, be watchful to tend My Church with a true filial care. There is great need of personal devotion in all thy ministry. The pomp of the world avails not. If thou wouldst tend My Church aright thou must learn from her. Else wilt thou fail in thy faith. See how My saints have been scorned from age to age. Rejoice to share their scorn. Seek not to triumph by worldly artifice. Wait while I am absent, that thou mayest have thy part in the great bridal feast when I shall return.

O Lord, I know that in ministering to Thy Church I ought to learn the faith and patience of the saints. Teach Thou me, O Lord Jesu. Let the memory of Thy Passion strengthen me to abide in every period of trouble and rebuke and blasphemy. Let not any darkness cause those to stagger who have stood together amidst the darkness of Calvary.

3. The Loss of Self.

The beloved disciple could only take the Blessed Virgin as his own mother by losing the thought of himself in the consciousness of Jesus. That maternity was not left to him as a substitute. He was taken up into that sonship by identification through Divine

power. A mysterious union was henceforth to bind him to his Lord, that he might act truly in His Name.

There must be a loss of self in the consciousness of Christ if we would do the work of Christ. So must there specially be in the Priest who would minister in Christ's Person and power for the maintenance of His Church. 'Henceforth I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

St. John takes the Blessed Virgin to his own home. She must henceforth be the head of it. Doubtless she was staying there already with her sister. The death of Christ changed everything. Because He has died, He is felt to be always present.

The change of relationship typified the change from the Jewish to the Christian Church, from a service measured by self and outward value to a devotion quickened by grace with absorbing efficacy. As St. John left the natural mother for the supernatural, so he left the Mosaic covenant for the covenant of Christ. Affections resting upon earth are changed to heavenly hopes. Salome, the *peaceful*, the elder sister, had been his mother. Now Mary, the mother of *bitterness*, takes him as a son to share the suffering life of the Crucified until the heavenly Jerusalem shine forth in triumph, and earthly sorrow be changed into the eternity of peace.

Why do we think so little of the sovereign claim of the Church upon our love, when Jesus has thus made His own sacred Person to be the life of all our conduct? Alas! we live as if we were still to be our own masters. Nay, 'we are bought with a price.'

O Jesu, grant me henceforth to be more faithful to Thee; to lose all thought of self and of mine own will; to live wholly for Thee, as demanding every effort in Thy holy Church.

My son, if thou will lose thyself, thou shalt find the blessedness of living wholly for Me. But thou must take My Church as the one object of thy life, if thou wouldst find the blessedness of the kingdom of grace. Many there are, especially in these latter days, who will toil for Me. Let it be thy care to live for Me. Take My Church into thine own home as the sanctifying principle of daily life, and of all thy hidden relationships. Blessed are those souls whose home is sanctified by the grace of My holy Church, cherished among them as the mother of new life. Their home shall spread its sanctifying power through all the world around. Vainly do they toil who would try to amend the world, and care not to abide with filial devotion, as the all-controlling principle of their lives. Thou canst not serve My Church by action in the world, unless thou take her to thine own home as the presiding power. Act as My representative. The Church is with thee not in the perishing relationships of time, but in the mystery of the life of God. Thou canst not take My Church as merely one amongst the forms of religion in the world. She is My Bride. She is thy mother. Thou must love. Thou must obey. Live for her.

Die for her if thou be called to do so. Anyhow must thou mortify thy natural affections one by one if thou wouldst live true to the sonship wherein she is confided to thy care. Thou seest how I have suffered. As the Child of man I suffered for the human race while living on the earth, that when I was exalted to heaven I might welcome to Myself as My Bride the Church which I have purchased with Mine own Blood. So now do thou fulfil My sonship upon the earth. Drink of My bitter cup, and thou shalt have thy part in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Lose all thought of thyself. Live in Me, and in My glory thou shalt live for ever.

O dear Lord Jesu, do Thou mortify in me, by the power of Thy Holy Spirit, all that is of earth. Let Thy power take possession of every faculty of my nature. Woe is me, that I so soon wander away from the true devotion which is due to Thee! Vain is every resolution that I make unless Thou give the grace of steadfastness. Let me feel Thy Cross separating me from all that is of the world. In communion with Thy saints let me feel Thy life lifting me up to the glory of Thy heavenly throne.

MEDITATION LXVI.

The Fourth Word from the Cross.

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And some of them that stood there, when they heard it, said, This man calleth Elijah.—St. Matt. xxvii. 46, 47.

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elijah.—St. Mark xv. 34, 35.

1. God manifest in the Flesh, although by Nature beyond Knowledge.

When our Lord Jesus speaks of Himself as being forsaken, we must remember who the Speaker is, and in what sense it was impossible that He should be forsaken. He is the Son of God, of one substance with the Father. The substance of the Godhead is an indivisible substance. The Son is not derived from the substance of the Father so as to exist in a like substance, as He was of the substance of His mother after the flesh. The human created finite substance is communicated by separation. The child is like the parent, having received what it is from the substance wherein the parent lived. The substance of Adam is communicated fragmentarily to all the multitudes of the human race. All are one with Adam by origin. None are one with him by inherence. Not so is the Substance of God. The Divine Nature cannot be divided into parts. Each

Person in the Godhead has the complete Substance of the Godhead. The Three Persons have this Substance by coinherence and mutual circumincession. They are One.

Moreover, this Substance is life. Not a living thing, as if there were in it a double principle, a molecular structure moved by an inherent inseparable force. No creature can exist otherwise than under molecular conditions. We may call them matter or spirit, but the thing which is their substance is different from the force which moves its elements. God is an active Force. We must not say we cannot understand this, for we can no more understand how the vital force moves any created molecules, nor how it is possible for any molecule to affect another molecule. In our natural body there is a force which we cannot understand. This force combines the molecules, but they have in themselves no power to affect one another. So it is even in inanimate objects. There is a force which holds them together. They have no power to cohere. In fact, however dense a mass of metal may seem, its ultimate molecules do not even touch one another, and the infinitesimal individuality is no more capable of going out of itself to affect the adjoining molecules with which it is found than a distant star has power to affect our globe. Such powers as mutual attraction accompany the particles. They are not the particles. In all creation there is a mysterious force which is the bond of unity. The universe without this force would cease to be One.

Such Force is the principle of Divine Love acting

with sovereignty upon all the works of God. What chain of agencies there may be we cannot tell. The existence of such Force is absolutely sure. Its character is absolutely unknowable.

This Force which operates in creation, but which is distinct from creation, is the will of the Creator. God is a Force existing not in any multitudinous universe of matter, but in Himself eternally. His mode of existence is to us unknowable. His action in created worlds is to us equally unknowable. His action in Himself and in His works is equally certain. A force that is not in action is no force at all, and never can become a force. The force which acts as a motive principle through the creatures of time and space must act within itself eternally. We must deny the resultants of creation because we cannot understand the expression of such a force, or else we must not deny its eternal activity because we cannot understand what it is in itself.

God, therefore, is an eternal Force, and His eternal activity is known to us theologically as the generation of His only begotten Son. By this eternal generation of the Son, the Divine Nature does not become multiplied, any more than by its action as a regulative principle throughout the created world. The generation of the Son of God is an eternal action within the Divine Essence. This generation of the Son involves the eternal procession of the Holy Ghost. For if there were not the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding, the act of the Divine generation would be an act in which the Divine Nature died. A force lives on. So in the

Godhead the Divine Nature generates the consubstantial Son as its eternal self-consciousness, and still goes forth in undiminished power to act in the Person of the Holy Ghost as Eternal Love. Creation testifies to the wisdom and love of the Creator. Revelation makes known to us the mystery of the Trinity, and though it does not enable us to solve the difficulties of creation, or understand how any things can exist, or how any two things can affect one another, it sets before our hearts and minds an eternal Object of contemplation, in whom we ourselves live, for His power is the principle of our own life. We can no more understand our own life as creatures than we can understand His life, the Triune Creator. We live. We love. We know Him as being both Life and Love. Theology does not make known the unknowable, but it enables us to stand as it were before the door of the Eternal Majesty, and instead of losing the thought of God in ignorant bewilderment, we lose the thought of ourselves in adoring love. All that we are comes from Him. Our love could have no origin in ourselves if love were not the action of His eternity. 'We love Him, because He first loved us.' He is Eternal Love. The Triune Personality of God is the source of nature's unity, of human society, of personal intimacy. As the creature rises in the scale of intelligence and love, it rises towards that primary activity of eternal relationship in the undivided Substance of the Godhead which the Christian revelation makes known to us. We cannot grasp the ocean of the Infinite, but it is to us no longer a black night

imprisoning our finite reason. We drink of the waters which were gathered up from it, and return into it. As we drink we are refreshed, and our eye and our heart gazes upon the vast expanse, and knows that this is no barren or unconscious waste whereon we gaze. We know it not, we love it not, save in a very imperfect way; but our finite knowledge and our finite love could not be, if this Infinite Abyss of glorious Energy did not know us and love us. God is perfect and unbroken Love. The Father acts through His only begotten Son in perfect wisdom, in the unity of the Divine Essence, which both in time and in eternity is Holy Love.

O Jesu, Word and Wisdom of the Father, I behold Thee Incarnate, as Thou hangest upon the Cross. I cannot know myself, nor can I know Thee, but I know that I am Thy creature, and I know that Thou who art my Creator hast taken to Thyself a created form, thus to make Thyself more closely known to me, and to prepare me for a knowledge which in this world I cannot exhaust. To know Thee more is to love Thee more, and love is infinite in energy as Thine own Self.

My son, by the manhood which I have taken, I call thee to worship the Father with whom I dwell in the indivisible unity of Godhead. I have taken upon Myself thy nature in its weakness that I may bring thee to partake of My Divine Nature in its glory. 'He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life' (John viii. 12).

That which thou knowest not in this world of death, thou shalt know hereafter by the Spirit of Life.

O Lord Jesu, I bow down before Thee as the Incarnate God. The accidents of earthly life are nothing to Thy Divine glory, which is the Eternal Truth. As I came out of nothing, so I am nothing, save by Thy creative power sustaining me. I can only know myself as the finite image of Thine infinite perfection, and Thyself as the infinite Source of all my capacities. So do I know myself as Thine image, and Thyself as the Lord in whom alone I can live.

2. The Filial Fellowship of the Crucified with the Father unbroken throughout the Passion.

The Son of God, in taking upon Himself a finite nature, did not forfeit His fellowship with the Father in the unity of the Eternal Spirit. It is true that we cannot understand how the finite and the Infinite are combined in one Personality; but we are equally incapable of understanding how the finite world exists within the grasp of an Infinite Power. The Personal Union does not create the difficulty, but the coexistence of the two natures which are personally united is the original difficulty inherent in the very idea of creation.

Indeed, the Incarnation points onward to a solution of the pre-existing difficulties, although revelation does not pretend to solve them. That they are soluble, we cannot doubt. That our powers of intelligence are capable of indefinite increase, we

cannot doubt. That man may be taken up into such union with the Divine Intelligence as altogether surpasses our imagination, we cannot doubt. That the desire for knowledge which is inherent in our progressive nature implies an original creative purpose whereby we are fitted for such exaltation, we cannot doubt. The unknown must ever be an object of apprehension, if not of abhorrence. We must conceive of the perfect knowledge of God as being man's true life and joy. If God is only to be known as the insoluble riddle of creation, a power speaking to us from every side with the admonition that, do what we may, we never can know Him, then we must conceive of a developing consciousness of God as goading man onward in every stage of his progress only to madness and misery. But, then, if man is to be raised to the life of God in any sense, it must be by the Son of God descending to take upon Himself our life, and becoming Incarnate. The Incarnation does not solve, but it points onward to the solution of our natural difficulty, and prepares the way. This is our Lord's own argument. God had predestined a chosen race to be the children of the Most Highest. If this predestination was to be accomplished, it could only be by the Son of God becoming Man. There must be a Giver, a Communicator, a Mediator, abiding in Divine life Himself, if He is to give that life to others (John x. 36).

Our Lord Jesus claims, therefore, to be the Son of God, abiding in the glory of the Father, although He has condescended to assume our earthly life. The participation of our deepest sorrows is no more

unworthy of the Son of God than the glory of the mightiest potentate on earth would have been. Indeed, it would have been morally unworthy of the Son of God to find any joy in merely accidental splendour or brute power. He came into a world of sufferers to ameliorate that suffering by a living power communicated from Himself to fellow-sufferers, changing the inmost characteristics of their being, and not by a mere external power, in the exercise of which He might indeed lessen the external appearance of suffering, but would leave the interior life of man uncleansed, unchanged, undeveloped, unworthy of exaltation. It was, therefore, morally more worthy of Him that He should be the greatest of sufferers in the world. Every suffering that He would heal was to be healed by an act of suffering developed first within Himself ere it could be communicated to the individual outside of Him. The exaltation of those who come to Him for grace is the onflow of His own meritorious action, developed in Himself by suffering, and communicated to them in their sufferings as a principle of Divine activity. So does the force of every medicine exist in the remedy ere it can stimulate the action of health in those who partake of it.

The healing, glorifying power of Christ is not a formless omnipotence. It is an active principle creating us anew after His own Image.

Since the healing power of grace is a Divine power transmitted through our Lord's humanity, it must be infinite in its Divine source, as also it is infinite in its restorative results upon mankind.

The Divine Nature in Christ did not, therefore, obliterate human sensibility in Him; but it intensified human endurance so as to suffer in a manner altogether beyond the sufferings of other men.

Truly the nature of God is in itself incapable of suffering, for suffering is inconsistent with Omnipotence. Our Lord Jesus Christ did not suffer as God any more than God the Father suffered. The Divine Omnipotence enabled His created nature to suffer to such an extent as must utterly have crushed any merely finite being. He still remained throughout all His sufferings the consubstantial Son of God. Had He not retained this Sonship in its eternal integrity, He would have been incapable of accomplishing the work of man's Redemption.

The Divine Omnipotence in Him did not overpower the human spontaneity with which, as Man, He ever accomplished the Father's will. He felt our sufferings more than we can feel them, because He saw the reason of those sufferings with a keenness of spiritual perception altogether beyond what we possess. He saw sin in its loathsomeness defiling man's moral nature, which was far worse than any remedial suffering by which man's moral nature might regain its purity. His human will was, therefore, always true to the Divine judgment. 'The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?' Surely the sufferings of His humanity, instead of marring His Divine joy, were to His own Person equally as to the Father an object of joyous contemplation, inasmuch as He saw the creature thus brought into perfect oneness with the Divine

Sanctity, and He contemplated the spread of Divine Sanctity from Himself to His saints, the members of His Body, and the participators in His suffering, as the reward by which His Manhood should hereafter be glorified eternally. 'For the joy that was set before Him He endured the Cross, despising the shame.'

His Divine Nature was thus abiding through all His sufferings in the unbroken fellowship of the Father's love, the joy of God, Creator and Redeemer.

As God's eternal Being is a Being of Infinite Joy, so He ever continued as the Coequal Partner of the Undivided Bliss. That joy was not a force which projected His Personality from the Divine Essence, so that for a season it might suffer here on earth and then return. In the strength of that omnipotence of joy He was able to suffer. The joy and the suffering were beyond what we can know, but even in our human nature we have the capacity of joy in suffering. Our mental and bodily constitution fit us for the voluntary and even joyous endurance of the intensest sufferings conceivable. Were the joy taken away, the nature would sink under the pain. So do we see how human nature was fitted for that work which the Son of God undertook. Strengthened by ever abiding in His Father's love, He was able to accomplish that work of atonement in which the suffering power of the humanity was exhaustless by the inherence of the Divine Immortality, and the Will of His Divine Person was in absolute unity of life with the Will of the Father.

O Jesu, Son of God, Giver of the Holy Ghost, strengthen my will by Thy Holy Spirit, that I may rejoice even in tribulations, seeking only by Thy grace to do the Will of the Father.

Abide in Me, and I will strengthen thee, O My son. By sharing My suffering thou shalt learn My joy; yea, a joy in the Holy Ghost far greater than any joy which nature can give thee.

O Lord, evermore teach me. If suffering will make me more conscious of Thy Presence, then let me suffer. I refuse nothing, if only I may be one with Thee.

MEDITATION LXVII.

The Mystery of Divine Purpose.

Why hast thou forsaken me?—St. Matt. xxvii. 46.

Why hast thou forsaken me?—St. Mark xv. 34.

1. The Cry of Wonder.

We must not interpret our Lord's cry as if it implied any distrust, or doubt, or reluctance, or complaint. It is the expression of His human Soul looking into the full purpose of His Incarnation. This purpose has been always present to His Mind; but as the appointed moment of death draws near, He gathers up all His powers to contemplate that which is to be. He dies by an act of His own will, and that act is not a blind impulse, but an intelligent participation of the counsels of the Eternal Godhead.

As He approached the end for which He came, it was not merely by bodily presence, but by intellectual contemplation and active volition. His human nature was advancing beyond the bounds of humanity to struggle with Satan. His finite nature was advancing through an intenser conflict than the flesh could know to the infinite glory of the Divine wisdom.

The Incarnation and the Atoning Sacrifice were not ordained of God without a Divine purpose.

That purpose the human Soul of Christ might know by intellectual submission. If it is to be accomplished, His intellect must actively correspond with the inspiration of the indwelling Godhead.

This question, therefore, is a necessary question for Jesus to make. It was not the fretful weariness of exhaustion or the surprise of a sudden reluctance which dictated it. The question itself was already provided for Him in the inspired Scriptures. He could not fulfil the Divine purpose without asking the question in His own heart. He utters the question with His lips in order that we may know of His communing with His Father. If we had not heard these words spoken, we should not have entered into the full appreciation of His own active part in His self-oblation.

More than that. These words teach us to look up to God in our own trials, that our sufferings may be intelligent acts of self-surrender and worship.

'Why?' The word has a double meaning. St. Matthew seems to hint at one meaning, St. Mark at the other. Why? What is the reason in the past for this suffering? Why? What is the purpose to be effected in the future by this suffering?

This word, therefore, sets before us the mind of Christ looking back to the original sin of Adam and all the misery of man's lost condition.

It sets before us also the glorious predestination of man to be accomplished by virtue of this atoning Sacrifice.

As we, in coming to the Holy Eucharist, ought to have a special intention, so Christ gathers up all

His human intelligence to contemplate the Divine intention with which He is corresponding in thus giving Himself to die.

This word, therefore, signifies His entire acceptance of the Divine Reason. If one may reverently say so, it implies that He knows thoroughly what He is about. The Reason is a reason greater than human reason could suggest; but the Reason of the Incarnate God looks to the Father's guidance and knows that it can share in the Divine counsel. His will draws not back. The oblation necessary for this purpose is no mechanical or unintelligent service given of necessity. It is with the perfect correspondence of the human judgment and reason with the Divine. He takes full account of man's necessity while He acts as man's representative Victim. He takes full account of God's glory while He, as God's Representative, achieves by His suffering the victory of Redemption. 'The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do.' So now He looks up to the Father that He may accomplish the work of atonement.

Psalm xxii. helps us to realize the confidence with which Christ looks up to the Father, for it goes on to speak of the Divine holiness. 'Thou continuest holy.' The reason, therefore, is one wholly consistent with that Divine holiness.

If ever the mind of man is tempted to murmur at God's judgments, let us come before the Cross, and hear Him who is the very Incarnate Wisdom crying unto God that this mystery, which is beyond all human measurement, may be unfolded to Him.

A true active human experimental knowledge could be gained in no other way than by the Cross. Only in the practical infinity of suffering could the intellectual infinity of purpose be realized. His human Mind asked a question in His deep self-abasement which eternity was to answer in glory.

O Jesu, how unsearchable are the judgments of God, and His ways past finding out! All the purposes of God towards men are gathered up in Thine own Person upon the Cross. O let me not wander away in the vain imaginations of my own fleshly mind. Let me hide myself in Thee. With Thee I shall be safe whatever sufferings on earth may be my portion. They are working out for Thy members the glory which surpasses understanding. In Thee I would seek to learn the Divine purpose which apart from Thee can never be attained. Thou hast asked the question why Thou didst thus suffer. Thou hast asked it for Thyself and for me. Thou hast attained to the answer in the glory of Thy heavenly kingdom, and Thou wilt make the answer known to me in the manifestation of Thy glory if I abide patiently sharing Thy Cross.

Persevere unto the end, and in the end, My son, thou shalt know the Father's love which dwelleth in Me, that thou mayest be filled with all the fulness of God.

Truly, Lord Jesu, my proper knowledge of Divine mysteries is not to know. What I know after the flesh, I know but faultily. If I believe in Thee so as to accept that which I know not, then can I look to Thee to fill me with Divine knowledge more and more.

2. The Forsaking.

Consider what the limits of this forsaking are. Jesus as God remains in the active, joyous unity of the Divine life and love. His Humanity is the instrument of His Personal action, and can do nothing that has not its rise in His Personal Divine Will. His Divine Person acting through the Humanity necessitates the co-operation of the Eternal Spirit, proceeding from His Divine Person.

We must not, then, tolerate any suggestion as to the character of this forsaking, which implies that the Humanity ceases to be the object of the Divine love, or that it can be treated by God as if it were not truly worthy of love. The psalm from which the words are taken assumes the continuance of the Divine love. The question is asked not in a spirit of doubt, as if the Psalmist thought that God had withdrawn His favour, but in a mysterious wonder how this forsaking is compatible with the undoubted continuance of that love, and with the certain assurance of final triumph in which He still continued.

Indeed, the words, 'My God,' are of themselves sufficient to show that the Speaker was conscious of His unity with God remaining unbroken. He claims a special relationship as Man to God, when He says, 'Thou art My God even from My mother's womb.' That title is the special prerogative of the Incarnation. 'He shall call Me, Thou art My Father, My God, and the Rock of My salvation. And I will make

Him My Firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth' (Ps. lxxxix. 27, 28).

It was not, then, the essential power of Divine life which was withdrawn, but the outward sensibility of Divine comfort. He did not bear the loathsomeness of sin in a human form having all His sensibilities neutralized by Divine manifestation. He felt sin with a human sensibility as fully as God hated sin with a Divine justice. This it was necessary He should do. Otherwise He could not have dealt with our sins as our sins required.

The Lord laid upon Him the iniquity of us all, and He had to feel its evil; not the evil of their consequences, but the evil of their essential character. He did not feel the anger of God resting upon Himself because He bore our sins, but He felt a hatred of the sins He bore as great as was God's hatred of them. It was just because He continued so truly in the Father's love that He felt so intensely the terrible burden of sin, so hateful to God, and so hateful to Himself, because His own moral sense as Man was in perfect correspondence with the Divine judgment.

By the Incarnation He was identified with the human race, although ever abiding in the unity of the Godhead. As God loved the world,—that ideal predestinated humanity which He intended to glorify in Himself,—so Jesus loved mankind in the full consciousness of those wondrous possibilities to which Divine love called every man. Such Divine love bound Him to man. So in unity of nature He felt the wounded love which separated Him from all

His brethren. The Divine disappointment found its embodiment in the Incarnation. When we read in Genesis that God repented, we must remember that those words do not gain their full meaning until we see the Divine Sufferer upon the Cross bewailing the sins of His brethren.

We are not to limit this forsaking to the few hours upon the Cross. It was the law of Christ's life of humiliation, although as the end draws near the awfulness of its reality attains a superficial manifestation. During all those three and thirty years it had been the interior law of His Incarnation. The forsaking was the preparation for the acceptance. The discipline of the flesh effects the glorification hereafter in the Spirit. 'In the days of His flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him out of death, and having been heard for His godly fear, though He was a Son [of the Father's substance], yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered' (Heb. v. 7, 8).

His human nature, therefore, had to be perfected as the human nature of other men. But for this His obedience would have possessed no moral virtue. He was not left without the Divine unction, but He was left to exercise His Human Will in the fulness of that tremendous struggle with evil to which He was called. The human nature was perfected in Him, not paralyzed, by the Divine indwelling. In the realm of nature, and with all the hateful surroundings of evil, He had to act with sensibilities quickened by Divine perfection, but physical

instrumentalities weak and weary by reason of the Fall.

'What is there in Me that Thou hast forsaken Me?' So we may develop the force which the original words possess by their peculiar arrangement. He does not complain of the forsaking; but He expresses wonder why One so perfect as Himself should be forsaken by the all-holy Godhead—left to bear the struggle of sin, whereas His nature was created for the very purpose of enjoying the Divine holiness.

We must remember that the Humanity of Christ, perfect as it was, would not have fulfilled the Divine Will but for the unction of the Holy Ghost resulting from the Hypostatic Union. The Second Person of the Godhead acted in the weakness which belonged to our flesh by reason of the Fall; not with a charmed life of insensibility arising from Divine omnipotence, but by the power of the Holy Ghost continually developed by the action of His Human Will. So by the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God.

How must this remembrance comfort us in our weakness! That same Spirit dwells as personally with each of the faithful members of Christ's Body as He dwelt with Christ the Head. It is our own fault that we do not call His Divine power into operation. He does not come to exempt us from weariness and pain any more than He exempted Christ. Just in proportion as we look to Him for help to enable us to bear our suffering, so shall we find Him sanctifying us even as He ever preserved

Christ in the perfect holiness which befitted the Incarnate Godhead. The work was the work of Christ in His Manhood, though the power was the power of the Spirit of Christ proceeding from His Divine Person. Now must the work be ours, but the power is the power of the same Spirit in us as in Him.

O Jesu, who didst take upon Thy spotless Self the burden of our sinful humanity, that Thou mightest purge our nature, and call us individually into Thyself, to live by the power of Thy Holy Spirit, grant that I may show forth my thankfulness to Thee by cherishing the Presence of Thy Holy Spirit, and the perfections of Thy Humanity glorified now at the Right Hand of the Father.

My son, think of My life of suffering when I dwelt in the sinful world where now thou hast to follow Me. Doubt not the all-sufficiency of My grace, or the power of My Holy Spirit. Therefore did I endure to have My Humanity forsaken of that Divine joy in My life on earth, even that I might provide strength for thee to follow My example, and gather thee eventually to be partaker of My reward.

O Jesu, Jesu, woe is me! Thou wast ever true to the Father during all Thy life; but I am continually forsaking Thee, though Thou dost never forsake me. O how justly mightest Thou have forsaken me times without number, and cast me altogether away! O Jesu, forsake me not now! I know Thou wilt never

forsake. O hold Thou me up, that I may not forsake Thee.

3. The Purpose of the Forsaking.

Our Lord was, therefore, left to experience the hatefulness of sin in the clearness of a human intelligence acting by the light of the Eternal Spirit —the sympathy of a nature in which He was one with sinners, and His filial fellowship with God the Father, whose glory was outraged by man's sin. The Divine nature gave Him no joy wherewith to counterbalance this suffering. True, He looked forward to the joy of the Divine purpose which He would accomplish in the end; but He could not experience that future joy without violating the conditions of His present struggle. The glory of a victorious confidence may strengthen a struggler in his conflict, but it does not lessen the physical strain of the immediate effort or the repulsiveness of any present surroundings. So was it with our Lord in His struggle with evil.

We must remember that our Lord was not merely suffering as a supposed criminal. God forbid! To human sight He bore the likeness of sinful flesh, but all along He was the one Object in creation which the Father delighted to contemplate, and the Source of every excellence that any of the heavenly host possessed. Angels delighted when from time to time they might minister to Him. But now for a season they also have to leave Him in solitude, watching and worshipping as in the wilderness, waiting until—

not, as in Gethsemane, one alone may be sent to strengthen the Sufferer, but—all may be gathered around Him to welcome the risen Lord. Thus had He to tread the winepress of God's wrath alone. Not that He was trodden in that winepress, but He stained the robe of His humanity with the blood of the sinful humanity with which He identified Himself. His Body, red with Blood, showed how He had borne the conflict. He had been rescuing man from the power of Satan. Edom in the prophets represents man—that is, Adam—in the stronghold of sin. Herein He was alone among His enemies. Man could only see Him as a Sufferer, apparently drowned in that Red Sea of Blood; but in His suffering He really was a Conqueror. 'By that Blood of the covenant He would deliver the prisoner out of the pit wherein was no water.' 'The year of His redeemed had come' (Zech. ix. 11; Is. lxiii. 4).

He was thus left alone to struggle, that as by man came death, by Him, the Second Adam, might also come the resurrection from the dead. The wounds which He bore on His Humanity would be found as living principles of glory. They who hated Him would find His Blood resting upon them and upon their children. Yes; so would all the human race be trodden down by Him who bore our sins, unless they rose with Him in the participation of His holiness.

He trod down the powers of darkness, for they held mankind in subjection by dwelling in men. Not the men, but the indwelling spirits of evil, were

the object of His treading. These were the seed of the serpent, doing the will of their father. Over them the seed of the woman was to be victorious, delivering them from the intoxication of Satanic inspiration—the glory of the world, which was at enmity with God. Mankind were the willing slaves, the children of Satan, by reason of the Fall, and the blood of nature had to be shed in order that they might seek the Blood of the renewing covenant, which was shed by Jesus from Himself in the act of delivering them. He shed their blood through His own veins. Every wound that He bore for their sins was a wound whereby they might be healed, if they would seek His healing Blood; but it was a wound which would turn to their destruction if they did not turn to Him. This was the consequence of the real oneness of nature in which He was joined with them. His bloodshedding healed the penitent. His bloodshedding was the doom of the unbelieving, who crucify Him afresh by 'accounting His Blood, whereby they are redeemed, a common thing, having done despite unto the Spirit of grace' (Heb. x. 29).

So was He left alone that the victory might be the victory of man. This victory looked backward to the Fall, and onward to the final restoration of all things.

Was He indeed forsaken? Surely He was forsaken in love. 'For a small moment have I forsaken Thee, but with great mercies will I gather Thee' (Is. liv. 7).

We may well be content to share in this forsaking if God see fit. He will not so forsake as to leave

us to the tyranny of the enemy; but to leave us for the opportunity of the struggle, the victory of faith. The cry of the faithful must prolong the cry of the Crucified with a perfect confidence. 'I will keep Thy statutes: O forsake me not to the end' (Ps. cxix. 8).

O Jesu, as Thou wast left alone in Thy struggle, and didst prevail, be Thou with me in my struggle, for without Thee I cannot prevail. There is none who can tread the winepress but Thou alone. If I should attempt to tread the winepress in my own indignation against sin, I must perish. Thou alone canst trample down our sinful humanity with an indignation equal to the Divine Justice. Thou sufferest in the struggle, but dost not perish. Thou comest forth from the struggle victorious, and callest me unto Thyself. Be Thou with me! Let Thy Blood inspire me with Thy holy indignation, strengthen me to suffer in this conflict, raise me to the participation of Thy victorious Resurrection.

O My son, forsake Me not! Fear not if thou seem to be forsaken! Mine Eye is ever upon thee. In every moment of temptation and affliction I will watch over thee.

Blessed Jesu, my Lord and my God, Thou hast called me by Thy Name. I am Thine. 'My heart and my strength faileth; but Thou art the Strength of my heart, and my Portion for ever.'

MEDITATION LXVIII.

The Fifth Word from the Cross.

And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. And the rest said, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to save him. — St. Matt. xxvii. 48, 49.

And one ran, and filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to take him down. — St. Mark xv. 36.

And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou art the King of the Jews, save thyself. — St. Luke xxiii. 36–38.

After this Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst. There was set there a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth. — St. John xix. 28, 29.

1. The Vinegar.

When our Lord said, 'I thirst,' we read that one of the soldiers dipped a sponge in a vessel full of vinegar. This seems to have been an act of kindness, simple as it was. And yet it only tended to make the other soldiers mock the more. They said, 'Let be; let us see whether Elias will come to take Him down.'

It is, indeed, possible that even this gift of the vinegar may have been made with intention to prolong His life rather than to allay His thirst. Possibly they thought that Elias would come, and that He might be kept alive until then.

The soldiers, in all probability, were Syrians. That may have been the reason why our Lord used

the Syro-Chaldaic form 'Eloi' instead of the Hebrew. They, however, heeded not the call to God. The Jews would have considered Him an impostor and a blasphemer. Not so the soldiers. They would think Him a fanatic. At the same time, the strange darkness must have filled their minds with an awful apprehension. They would know by popular talk of some connection between Messiah and Elias. Their hearts were steeled against pity. Yet they were probably trembling in the sense of another world being so near. An apparition of Elias would be to them no incredible thing. They would shrink from it. They would let their fears find vent in sarcasm.

The vinegar must not be confounded with the drugged wine which was offered to Jesus at first in order to stupefy Him. That anodyne He refused to drink. This vinegar in a bowl may probably have been set near at hand for the soldiers to wash their hands when stained with blood by reason of nailing Jesus to the Cross. Vinegar, however, was also a common drink for the soldiery, but it is scarcely likely that they had it with them for the purpose of drinking. If it had been intended for drinking, it would probably have been in a skin; but this vinegar was in a bowl, so that the sponge was dipped in it, which looks more like preparation for washing themselves.

This being vinegar, and not drugged wine, did not alter what Jesus had said, that He would not drink any more of the fruit of the vine until the Father's kingdom should come.

Great indeed must that thirst have been which Jesus now experienced! Yet this was a poor solace for it, after all. A sponge full of vinegar! It was doubtless all that they had to give near at hand. Surely it was even in this respect a type of the poverty of man's condition in this world of sin.

We must not allow ourselves to suppose, as some do, that Jesus took this vinegar because He had not strength for what yet remained of the few minutes of earthly life, or that he asked for it as desiring its refreshment for His Body ere He died! Such thoughts are unworthy of the Son of God, who could in a moment have gathered up strength within Himself, as He did when He talked with the Samaritans, and as, indeed, He was to do presently, crying out again with a loud voice. Other strange notions have been imported into the word, as that it was an intense humiliation to ask relief from His mocking enemies! Not physical relief, but Divine mystery, dictated that word. The soldiers, in acting as they did, fulfilled that Scripture, 'When I was thirsty they gave Me vinegar to drink' (Ps. lxix. 22).

O Jesu, how poor was that relief which man could offer to Thee on the Cross! Poor, and only suitable to prolong the misery of Thy life! Let me not seek the indulgences of earth in any times of need. Man could only offer vinegar to Thee. Let my solace be to drink the precious Blood which Thou givest to the faithful. That wine shall indeed make glad my heart, and strengthen me not to linger on in earthly misery, but to rise to heavenly life.

My son, learn as thou watchest beside My Cross to bear with every pain. Look up to God. He will supply thy need. Yet remember that earthly things at the very best are only as the vinegar. If thou knowest the joy of My kingdom, thou must feel how miserable is all that earth can do for thy relief.

Even so, Lord Jesu! Thou alone canst provide for my relief. Thou alone canst make the worthless things of earth to have any value.

2. The Thirst for Souls.

Had our Lord merely felt the terrible bodily pain of thirst, He could easily have set it aside, had it been right for Him so to do, but He felt a greater thirst than this. There was a thirst which He could not allay. Israel was the vine which He had planted, and He longed to find refreshment in her fruits of righteousness. 'What could have been done more unto My vineyard, that I have not done to it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?' (Is. v. 4.)

Surely the vinegar in the bowl, where perhaps the soldiers had already washed off His own Blood from their hands, was a sad symbol of the Jewish nation.

The hyssop had been put into His hands as a mock-sceptre. This empty reed was no less fitly symbolical of the Jewish polity. The hyssop growing on the wall might be taken to represent

the Jewish Sanhedrim of those degenerate days, bitter and empty. In their bitter envy they had assailed Him. Their whole religious condition was utter hollowness. They did not even believe in their own position except for purposes of self-aggrandizement. The wall on which it grew was a type of the fence of the law. High upon this wall those Sanhedrists had a position of eminence, but not of substance. Alas! such was the degraded organism which still held some show of authority in the city where God had been pleased to put His Name.

The sponge taken out of the sea sets before us the spiritual condition of the people, dried up and lifeless. Rightly was it dipped in vinegar. Such religious offices as were now given could only be an offence to God. 'Your solemn feasts my soul hateth' (Is. i. 14).

Thus did Jesus look in vain to have His thirst slaked by any offers of devotion from His own nation. The Syrian soldiers of Rome were round about the Messiah of Israel, and the ancient people were cowering under a terrible manifestation of Divine vengeance when they ought to have been rejoicing in their Paschal Feast.

Yet the bodily thirst of Jesus was occasioned by His thirst for the souls of these His people. He had come down from heaven to visit His Vine, but all was useless. Now must be fulfilled what the dresser of the vineyard said to the lord who planted it. Now, in this third year of trial, cut it down.

Jesus had shed His Blood to fertilize that soil,

but all in vain. They had invoked His Blood as a watchword of curse, not of cure.

O how did Jesus, who within a week had wept over Jerusalem, while He entered it triumphantly, gaze upon the Temple-height, and suffer an agony of thirst for His people far more intense than that which His Body suffered in the loss of blood!

Let us not be discouraged if we have in like manner to thirst for souls which yet refuse to be helped by the ministry of grace. We may thirst and find no response. Nevertheless, since Jesus has thus thirsted, it is a blessing for us to share His thirst. And we need not doubt, that even if those for whom we are specially solicitous do not hear our voice, others, according to the good providence of God, shall in due time be given for the accomplishment of our prayer.

O Jesu, dost Thou thirst for my poor soul? Truly my unworthiness makes Thee none the less ready to welcome me, for Thou wilt change me from the worthlessness of nature to the richness of grace. Thou thirstest for me that I may partake of Thy richness, not that any gift in myself may give Thee satisfaction.

My son, thou canst not know what My thirst is, while I desire thee. There would be no need for Me thus to thirst if thou desiredst Me in like manner. I thirst in order to awaken a thirst in thee. Alas! thou hast but little thirst for Me. Therefore thou dost not feel the

same. Thou art rather content with the thirsty wilderness of the world, than rejoicing in the plenteousness of Mine House. Yet canst thou find no real satisfaction in the world. I ask of all the nations of the world, 'Give Me to drink;' and surely they ought to come to Me, and ask of Me to give them the living water.

O Lord Jesu, evermore give me this living water. Yea, even if I thirst not as I ought, give me to drink, that I may thirst more truly. Yea, blessed be Thy Name if I thirst at all! Give me to drink, that I may thirst more and more.

3. The Thirst for God.

There was, however, a more intense thirst which the humanity of Christ was now suffering. As the Father had left Him alone in His struggle He thirsted for the refreshment of the Father's manifestation.

The Psalms with which Book I. of the Psalter closed find their fulfilment in the acceptable offering of Jesus, taking the place of those sacrifices in which God took no pleasure. Jesus upon the Cross is that Poor and Needy One whom the wise reflect upon with reverence. He now takes up the cry of Book II. of the Psalter: 'My soul is athirst for God, even for the living God: when shall I come and appear before the presence of God?' (Ps. xlii. 2). His knowledge of the Divine goodness makes Him thirst the more, that in His Humanity He may experience that goodness. That experience can only be by His

glorious Ascension. The humanity cannot experience the Divine goodness amidst the limitations of this lower world. The glory of all the heavenly host could not satisfy this thirst. Man's nature was formed for God, and can never feel its thirst satisfied save by being taken up to the Throne of the Father.

This word, 'I thirst,' is therefore, so to speak, the first word of return to God. The previous utterance spoke of the isolated condition of Messiah in His humiliation. Now He expresses His longing to return from His finished work of earthly toil, and enjoy the sweetness of that Divine consolation which is in store for Him. He would not speak thus until the time was come for that consolation to be given. It was His meat and drink upon the earth to do the Will of Him that sent Him. He thirsted for righteousness not as a gift to be received from without, but as a power to be developed from the infinite depth of His own interior activity, springing up unto eternal life in fulness of energy, so that others might drink of its exhaustless abundance. Now He thirsts after righteousness as a glorifying power, which may enable Him to give forth its Divine copiousness to meet the manifold needs of thirsting souls, that they may drink thereof and live in Him. Truly He thirsts for souls, but that He may refresh them in their thirst. He thirsts for God that His relation to the Father, proper to His Divine Person, may make the Human Nature which He has assumed affluent with its own all-sufficing richness of glory.

We must never forget how truly the Manhood of Christ does rejoice in the glory of the indwelling Godhead. It is easier for us to think of the suffering incident to His life of humiliation. But it is no less necessary to remember the joy inherent in His life of exaltation. This word expresses His consciousness that that joy is ready to be manifested. He does not merely leave the world in blind confidence that all will be well. He thirsts after that glory of Divine Presence which He now beholds, which all through His life on earth He has beheld. He knows the gladdening efficacy of the waters of life. He created human nature so that both body and soul might rejoice in the living God. Man was formed in God's Image, so that every faculty of man's nature might be replenished from some corresponding source of Divine excellence. As the soul quickens the bodily organs with healthy joy, so should God, in His simplicity of spiritual force, make the treasuries of His manifold perfection develop themselves in accordance with each of the faculties of man's receptive nature, and lift man up into the brightness of His active love.

Wonderful is this thirst which the Son of man now allows Himself to feel! It is the thirst not of an individual soul alone, but of the human race. He thirsts on His own behalf. He thirsts on behalf of all of His Redeemed, as being His Body, so as to open His nature to receive the fulness of that Divine outpouring which shall be given to Him, and through Him to all His members. He anticipates in this thirst all the wondrous aspirations that

ever should stir the hearts of His saints to all future time. He permits Himself in this thirst to realize by one act of longing all the needs of humanity, that mankind may rise to the fulness of Divine life.

Hitherto He has had to do the work of earth. Now that work is finished. Now the Scripture has to be fulfilled in His exaltation. Therefore He says, 'I thirst.' What is finished or accomplished is the work of suffering. What has to be fulfilled is the promise of Divine glory.

Intense as was the bodily thirst, what was it as compared with this spiritual thirst wherewith He looked up! 'As the hart brayeth after the water-brooks, so doth My Soul for Thee, O God' (Ps. xlii. 1)! The threefold Psalm (xlii., xliii.) seems to point specially to the three days of death, burial, and resurrection.

He is going into the pit where the prisoners were detained, and had no water of refreshment. He will make the rock give forth its water to the pilgrim. He, the Son of man, greater than Jacob, will drink of this water Himself, and His children, and His cattle (John iv. 12),—drink, so as never to thirst again.

O wonderful thirst! Do I share in it? O that I might thirst more for this heavenly stream!

O Jesu, Thou didst thirst that I might be enabled to drink. Help me to thirst, that I may find the blessedness of Thy redeeming love in the joyous fellowship of the Father's glory.

My son, blessed are they that do thus thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. . . . Hearken diligently unto Me. . . . Hear, and your soul shall live.' Thirst after the Divine truth, and the truth shall be your joy.

Even so, Lord Jesu! Give me in such measure to drink of this water of life, that I may thirst the more; that mine eyes may be opened which are blinded with the weariness of this sinful world; that I may find the love wherewith Thou dost replenish Thine elect strengthening me to love the Father, according to the truth of Thy mediation, in the perfect power of Thine Eternal Spirit.

MEDITATION LXIX.

The Sixth Word from the Cross.

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished.—St. John xix. 30.

1. The Completeness of Prophecy.

'I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it is finished!' (Luke xii. 50). 'We go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by means of the prophets shall be finished for the Son of man. For He shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and shamefully entreated, and spit upon: and they shall scourge and kill Him: and the third day He shall rise again' (Luke xviii. 31–33). 'That which is written must be finished in Me, for the things concerning Me have their finishing' (Luke xxii. 37). 'Jesus knowing that all things were now finished, that the Scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst' (John xix. 28). 'When He had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished' (John xix. 30).

The Passion of Jesus was a Baptism. He was straitened by having to undergo this Baptism of humiliation. Now it is finished. He has allowed Himself to be passively plunged in the depth of spiritual evil. Now He rises unharmed and victorious. His

Resurrection begins with His death, for by death He is first of all set free from the conditions of man's humiliation. Henceforth, even in the grave, there is to be a gradual manifestation of His power. He is thus proclaimed to be the Son of God with power by the Resurrection from the dead. We are baptized into His death that we may be partakers of His Sonship. All, therefore, that was essential to this immersion of the Saviour in man's woe is now finished.

The details are given by our Blessed Lord upon another occasion—deliverance to the Gentiles, mocking, maltreating, spitting, scourging, killing. These are all now finished matters. The Sanhedrists have used the Roman powers to kill Him. Although He still lives, the work as far as they are concerned is complete. He will give up the ghost, and He will rise again. These are acts of His own will. In another place, His being numbered with the transgressors is singled out, for it contains all the incidents of a malefactor's death. All was finished when Jesus said, 'I thirst.' So we are expressly told. And yet that thirst contained one element of prophetic suffering—the vinegar.

Our Lord knew that all was now finished when He spoke that word, 'I thirst.' This was the first self-asserting utterance, and therefore was the beginning of a return from the parched valley of human exhaustion. Up to this time He had been simply passive, meekly accepting the injuries which were done to Him. In this world He suggests what those round about Him should do, although they do

it not in such a way as to give Him the proper refreshment, and, indeed, fulfilled the prophecy which spake of His receiving vinegar as a result of having made known His thirst.

The offer, however, was not altogether unkind. Perhaps it was the best that those soldiers could do for Him.

If we take this view, it well accords with the turning-point of our Lord's suffering. It shows that when, having suffered all things, He looked back to regain His rightful life, mankind had nothing to offer Him. The vinegar symbolizes the elect people of God in the sourness of their degraded estate. As the waters of Marah were a mockery of the Israelites in their thirst until the tree was cast into them, which was a symbol of the Cross, so all that Israel could do for Christ was loathsome. His Passion must restore the flavour of the wine of heaven.

Now, therefore, He says, 'It is finished.' What a tremendous signature given from the Cross to the words of prophecy! The prophets spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and the details of Scripture are not merely subsequent applications of words spoken with reference to some other object. They were spoken so as to delineate beforehand what Christ should suffer. They were a heavenly testimony to His truth. Indeed, the truth of His being Very God would be too stupendous a thought to be rightly accepted without such an agelong testimony of Divine utterance. Neither miracles, nor sublimity of utterance, nor majesty of moral character would

avail without such external preparation to warrant the offer of Divine worship to any created being. This word, therefore, stands with special significance at this culmination of His Messianic manifestation. He has now suffered everything which Messiah was to suffer—'all that the prophets have spoken. Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory? So He Himself, beginning from Moses and all the prophets, expounded to the disciples going to Emmaus in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.' The prophets spoke not words which might be applied to Him, but words which could not have their 'end' except in Himself. 'Christ is the End of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth' (Rom. x. 4). The Old Testament would be a broken pillar if it were not the central pillar sustaining the whole edifice of the Christian faith.

O Jesu, prophets wrote of Thee, and died in hope of seeing Thee. Blessed be Thy Name, who hast now fulfilled their hope, and given Thyself to us, that we may live in the power of Thy grace.

My son, the spirit of prophecy is My testimony (Rev. xix. 10). See that thou livest along with them to whom it was given to have this testimony. Blessed is the hope which has brought them to the life of Mine elect, and blessed art thou in that the Spirit of My Father has drawn thee now to live in the fulness of that power for which they hoped, that thou with them mayest be perfected.

O Jesu, open mine eyes to see more and more of the mysteries of Thy Divine Word. Help me, while I search into their testimony concerning Thee, so to learn by their various modes of declaration the several parts of Thy truth which Thy Holy Spirit has manifested, speaking by the prophets, that I may rejoice in the undivided glory of its perfect life.

2. The Completeness of Suffering.

The humiliation of Jesus was thus complete. He had fulfilled all that the law had foretold respecting Him, and all was in suffering. His miracles, His teaching, His character, all that constituted His Personal manifestation, was stamped with this Divine mark of wondrous suffering. Nothing produced its natural effect. All was but the occasion of suffering constantly renewed and intensified. At the end of all, He hangs upon the Cross, 'despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.' The suffering has touched upon every possible element of His human life. In everything He has borne witness to another life, quite apart from this world. Nothing has been done so as to effect any earthly result. All His words and actions have been for the fulfilment of His mission, that He might bear witness unto the truth.

Nothing that embodies adequately the truth of the Eternal and the Infinite can be without suffering in a world of falsehood and time. In our first parents truth was an object of desire. So it remains to all the future ages of mankind. Glimpses may

be gained. The truth cannot be adequately known. They were being trained to receive the development of truth that they might live in a higher state of existence. That higher state is still set before us. Christ came into this world, being Himself the very Incarnate Truth. This never could meet the apprehensions of mankind under the carnal perversions of the Fall without coming into antagonism. The Infinite is not the mere enlargement of the finite. It is a contradictory form of being. God, in assuming our nature, chose to act under a form which, in the very nature of things, involved suffering, for it was a limitation of the Divine glory, and therefore every faculty of the nature so assumed had to feel the strain of the supernatural.

That strain was the preliminary to that glorification wherein the manhood of Christ now exults. The suffering which comes to us in the discipline of faith is in like manner a preparation for us to share the future glory.

O what a burden it was to Christ to act amongst men in the truth of His Divine Omnipotence!

Suffering was thus coextensive with the union between His natural human power and the indwelling Godhead. We cannot appreciate that suffering, nor can we appreciate the joy of the Manhood, taken up now so as to be the instrument of all Divine actions at the right hand of God. That glorification is a transformation of our nature in which hereafter we are to share.

But, then, the suffering of Christ was further complete by reason of the sinfulness of humanity with

which it was substantially one. Every element of His humanity felt the jar of the sinfulness with which it was allied, not only by origin, but by continuous sympathetic life. The rest of mankind were not so dead as to be an unconscious adjunct of His personality. He felt the oneness of moral being uniting them to Himself, and thus He suffered along with them all both in their sufferings and by hatred of their sins.

Nor was this all. 'For the love that He bore unto them they took His contrary part' (Ps. cix. 3). They hated Him for the witness that He bore against them, as just Lot. They hated Him for the declaration of His future kingdom, as Joseph's brethren hated him for his dreams. They hated Him for the sufferings in which they saw Him to be overwhelmed, as Job was reproached by his counsellors for his doctrine, as if He were 'stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.' They hated Him for His claims to speak in God's Name, as the Israelites hated Moses. They hated Him for His witness against their sins, as successive generations hated the prophets.

So did He suffer throughout life in every association. He must die, or else the Jews must die: He to die the object of natural antagonism, or they to die as the objects of Divine grace.

His whole nature was to be glorified, and therefore every element of His humanity had to suffer in order to win its reward. The reward was to be complete. So must the work of suffering be.

O Jesu, let me so reflect upon the completeness of Thy suffering, that I may shrink from no suffering wherein Thou callest me to share.

My son, as all the suffering due to thy sins was accomplished in Me, so shall all the glory which is due to My merits be thine if thou continuest in Me.

O Jesu, fill me with Thy grace, that I may count it all joy to suffer for Thy Name, in every form of outward shame and inward sorrow, in every pain of mind and body, if only it may be in the purity of heart wherein Thou callest me to draw near unto the Father.

3. The Completeness of Redemption.

'God hath indeed visited and redeemed His people.' The struggle of Christ with Satan now is finished. 'The powers of death have done their worst.' Jesus lives a Conqueror. The hosts of darkness have fled from the Cross. No external power could take His life away from Him. He was subject to death as a discipline to bear all that death can do against man in this our life of probation. He has suffered weariness, hunger, thirst. But death has found in Him no sinful infirmity. Death, therefore, cannot carry away His soul as a captive.

Satan has no further resources that he can bring to assail Jesus. Jesus has shown Himself mightier than he that is in the world. 'He has overcome the world' (John xvi. 33).

The victory is complete, although He hangs in such a form of mangled misery upon the Cross. It is this very completeness of misery which makes the victory complete. Were there any worldly alleviation, then something would be wanting to the victory. He has conquered, He has accomplished redemption, not by having external means at His disposal, but by having nothing of earth which can mar the inherent omnipotence of His own Person.

'He has acquired unto Himself a Church by His own Blood' (Acts xx. 28). He has got His Church round about Himself (*περιποιεῖσθαι*), by the prolific power of His Blood, streaming forth unchecked in the fulness of Divine, creative power to regenerate mankind. 'We have been redeemed not by corruptible things, as silver and gold, from the vain conversation received by tradition from our fathers,' as the Israelites were from Egypt, 'but by the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot' (1 Pet. i. 18, 19). As the Paschal lamb was the symbolic parent of Israel's new life, so is Christ the true Parent of our life as the redeemed of God. 'God sent Moses to be a prince and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared unto him in the mount' (Acts vii. 38); but Christ 'has found eternal redemption for us' (Heb. ix. 12), having come not as a servant sent by a mediatorial angel, but having come forth from God the Father, to be the 'One Mediator between God and men,' as being the Son of God over His own house. 'He has given His Soul as a Ransom for many' (Matt. xx. 28). Yea, 'He has given Himself a Ransom for all,' having

the witness of Divine authority when the proper time was come.

There can be now no further Redemption. Redemption is complete and eternal.

O Jesu, as Thou hast redeemed me from the power of sin, grant that I may ever walk in the freedom of that Spirit of adoption whereby Thou hast made me free. O let me welcome every suffering wherein I may share Thy grace. Always let me rest assured that suffering is the way to freedom, and all that earth can give tends only to bondage.

My son, I have finished all My work upon the Cross. Now I leave My Cross upon the earth that thou mayest suffer thereon, and, suffering, mayest win the grace which I by suffering have obtained. Fear not, whatever be the form in which thou hast to suffer. The Cross is Mine. My virtue comes to thee thereby. Abide in faithfulness. Thou shalt not fail to share My victory.

O Lord, let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be alway acceptable in Thy sight, my Rock and my Redeemer.

MEDITATION LXX.

The Eternal Son.

III. THE PRAYER OF COMMENDATION.

Father.—St. Luke xxiii. 46.

1. 'Father.'

The Son of God appealed to His Father at the beginning of this final stage of His Passion, deprecating the evil on which He was about to enter. He appealed to His Father at the culminating point of His Passion while being nailed to the Cross. That appeal was intended to present the oblation which He had made of Himself in its true character of Sonship. Now the suffering work is done, and He appeals once more to His Father, commending His Spirit into the Father's hands.

We must think of this word as being spoken now in the consciousness of triumphant power. He, the Son of man, has triumphed as the Son of God.

He thus calls upon His Father to witness the accomplishment of the work which He came down from heaven to do, to the glory of the Father. In the midst of all the hosts of heaven who have been watching around, He claims to be acknowledged as the Son of God. 'He shall call Me, Thou art My

Father, My God, and the Rock of my salvation. And I will make Him My Firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth' (Ps. lxxxix. 27, 28). His relation to the Father in the Eternal Sonship whereby He is consubstantial with the Father, is the Rock which gives Him firmness, so that He can truly claim to be Jesus, Salvation, the King of the Jews. He has borne the onslaught of all the powers of hell, and they have not prevailed against Him.

How the powers of heaven rejoiced to hear the Voice of Him that had now perfected His ministry! How the powers of hell trembled when that word, 'Father,' made them finally and fully conscious that the Word of God was about to crush their rebellion as the primary curse upon the serpent had denounced to them!

'Father!' How important it is for us to know that this is the only begotten Son! No other sufferings than His could have availed on our behalf. Thus we learn to accept sufferings as the truest token of sonship, the truest instrument of power, when we witness the sufferings of the Incarnate Son for the redemption of the world!

What else can we desire for ourselves than to suffer, since Jesus suffered? He was 'made perfect through suffering,' in whom all perfection dwelt; and we must be cheerful in the endurance of suffering as a means of union with Him.

He is to reign upon the Throne of God, and the angels look forward to see that kingdom developed through the death of the King. God is 'bringing His Son out of Egypt.' That cry of 'Father!' is

the claim of universal sovereignty. 'Give the King Thy judgments, O God, and Thy righteousness unto the King's Son' (Ps. lxxii. 1). This is the King whom God hath set upon His holy hill of Zion, stablished on the glorious Throne of the eternal decree, 'Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee' (Ps. ii. 7).

That cry, as it rises from the lips of man, is the warrant of man's restoration. Adam was by creation formed to be the son of God, having the Divine life breathed into his human nature; but Jesus calls God Father in the unity of the active Being of God. He is not taken up into the participation of the Divine nature, but is ever abiding therein. He has come forth from the Father into the world, 'taking the Manhood into God' by hypostatic union; and now He is returning to the Father, having perfected that Manhood by the struggle with all the powers of evil.

O Jesu, Son of the Blessed, as I hear Thee speaking to the Father I know that Thou art pleading on my behalf. Though I am no longer worthy of the sonship, yet dost Thou in Thy love deign to make me worthy.

My son, I go unto My Father, and if thou wilt partake of My Sonship in its glory, thou must follow by the discipline of the Holy Cross even as thou beholdest Me going before.

This is indeed the lot of God's children in the world. Lord, how can I shrink from it when I hear Thy Voice appealing to the Father? O let me hear that Voice whenever I am called to suffer. As Thou

wert with the three that were in the furnace, so wilt Thou show Thy protecting care over me if Thou art with me. O miserable dulness of my heart which fails of hearing Thy Voice! In every trouble let me hear that word which rises from Thy Cross. Thou callest to the Father. Thou wilt perfect me in all suffering for my place amongst the sons of God. Thou commendest Thy Spirit unto the Father. In commending Thyself, Thou commendest me, for I am Thine.

2. The Experience of this Sonship.

Jesus has lived upon the earth as the Son of God. In every act of His life He has been true to His Father. In every act of His life He has felt the hatred of the world. The relationship of Father and Son was in His case no mere nominal relationship. It did not express merely the fact of derived existence. It was a relationship of abiding life. The relationship to the Father constitutes the very personality wherein He lives one God with the Father. Every faculty, therefore, of His Manhood is drawn up into the consciousness of this filial relationship, and is exercised in the power of the undivided Spirit. His human character develops in the strength of this Divine life. In every act there was the consciousness of its effect upon the world outside, and its interior effect as developing a glory of Divine merit in the attainment of that perfect fulness wherein it should eventually be glorified through the Divine relationship. Every act of His life was not only

good and holy accidentally, so as to be pleasing to God in itself, but it was an element by which the Sonship was perfectly developed, so that each act was necessary in its own place for the maturity of the manifestation wherein the Son should be glorified. His human acts were not transitory acts, marking the day as it passed, but they all of them lived with a Divine virtue, and consequently they still abide in the Divine life. So when we hear our Lord uttering the word 'Father' at the completion of His oblation of Himself upon the Cross, we must think of the joy which He experienced in that He knew how perfectly the Will of the Father was accomplished by the oblation which He now presented to God. His own joy in giving Himself to the Father was identical with the Father's joy in accepting Him.

How the thought of this ought to stimulate us to live true to our Divine sonship as members of Christ! What will be the joy of being really able to look up to God and claim the Divine Fatherhood, because through life it has formed the law of our sonship! We must try to experience this sonship increasingly, so that at the last we may find it in all its fulness. God's Fatherly action towards us is always perfect and entire. Its effect upon us depends upon the reciprocity with which we act towards Him as His children. This is a substantive relationship, our participation in the consubstantial Sonship. It requires to be developed in daily action.

O Jesu, Eternal Son, Thou hast called me to the fellowship of Thy Sonship. Grant that I may act under

Thy continual guidance, that I may find acceptance through Thy merits amongst God's true children.

My son, be thou ever true to Me; for I will strengthen thee, and make all thine actions rise up to the Father with full acceptance.

Alas, O Lord, how prone I am to measure my actions by some worldly accident, instead of looking simply to Thy grace!

My son, the child of God cannot use the things of the world, so as to rely upon them. He who would do the work of My Father must do it in the strength alone of the Sonship which is given through Me.

Lord, help me always thus to act. O that the merit of Thy grace might inspire all my actions, and clothe them with the glory which is Thine! O that I might ever act so truly along with Thee, that I might experience the fulness of Thy Divine Sonship, perfecting all my daily actions in the life of God!

3. The Father's Love.

As the Son presents Himself to the Father, it is in the full confidence of the Father's love. In that love He has acted. To the brightness of that love He draws nigh, not merely for reward, but for welcome. This very love of the Father constitutes His reward. Mysteriously has the Father used Him for the accomplishment of His purposes of love to man, and now the Incarnate Son draws near in His Manhood to receive that love which He has been working

out during all the time of His ministry by every act of His sufferings. He has known throughout what the love of God to man was; and now, as Man, He comes Himself to be the Recipient. He receives that love. He communicates that love to His brethren.

O that substantive love which God gives! How far does it transcend any human love! It differs from human love, not only in degree, but in kind. The love of the Creator! It is a love which elevates into the very fellowship of the Divine life. It is a creative love, communicating new powers to those to whom it is given, lifting them up into a new order of life.

All our acts of worship given to God upon the earth are preparatory exercises whereby we may learn to love Him when manifested eternally. He who has welcomed the faithful soul with many an answer to prayer during life on earth, welcomes the soul at the last with the full manifestation of His own glory.

Here upon earth we know and feel assured of God's love to us. We can trust His goodness so as to rest satisfied that all His arrangements for us are wisely ordered for our good. We may have experienced the goodness of many dispensations which at the first seemed to us to be dark and gloomy. But, at the best, we cannot here on earth see the love of God shining out upon us, the brightness of His countenance ready to fill us with joy.

This, however, we look to attain, even to see God as His children, by whatever power of vision may

belong to that higher life to which He is calling us onward. 'When shall I come and appear before the Presence of God?' What a reward will it be for all the sufferings of earth, to spring as it were with filial confidence into the embrace of this Divine Fatherly love! Contemplate our Lord Jesus Christ, who as God ever beheld the Father's glory, commending Himself to His Father's keeping. In the security of this keeping He is to descend into hell and rise again. In the power of the Divine welcome He is to ascend to the Father's Throne.

O let me contemplate Him, as He leaves the world to enter upon this series of glorifications until the final splendour is attained! Let me think what it is to follow Him!

Am I afraid to trust myself to that Father's love? God forbid! If He has made known to me the reality of the sonship, surely I may trust Him to be faithful to that covenant. Jesus is gone before, and I cannot fear to follow. Jesus is Himself 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by Him.' Here, in suffering, He teaches me how to win that love; there, in glory, He shall teach me how to welcome it. The love of the Father to His only begotten Son is the mighty, the exhaustless ocean of power whereunto we are called.

Wonderful love! It is the love wherein the only begotten Son finds the reward of His Passion! It shall be His joy to make our feebleness expand to the immensity of the same delight.

O Jesu, teach me to contemplate the Father's love,

that I may rejoice therein as the strength of my life here on earth, and my eternal inheritance of joy.

My son, if thou abidest in Me thou shalt abide in the Father's love. The fulness of it shall be given thee. Yea, even as it is given to Me, so shall My people find it in themselves. The multitude of the elect exhaust not that love which I receive. I died for each and all. My Father loves them each and all. His love is not diminished for any one by that which is given to others; but as all in Me must love their brethren even as themselves, so is the love of the Father multiplied to every individual experience by knowing how fully all My redeemed ones partake thereof.

O Lord Jesu, blessed be Thou for Thy goodness. As Thou by death goest unto the Father, so let me die that I may be along with Thee in the glory of His love. In Thy death let me be dead unto the world, and let Thy life be my life, enabling me to live unto the Father.

MEDITATION LXXI.

The Seventh Word from the Cross.

And Jesus cried again with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit.—St. Matt. xxvii. 50.

And Jesus uttered a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.—St. Mark xv. 37.

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said this, he gave up the ghost. And when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.—St. Luke xxiii. 46, 47.

1. The Spirit of Christ.

The spirit is that power of our nature whereby we have intercourse with the unseen world. It is distinct from the soul as a power, a faculty. St. Paul compares the Spirit of Christ, as alone knowing the things of God, with the spirit of man, as alone knowing the things of a man which are in him (1 Cor. ii. 11). The Preacher of the Old Testament contrasts the spirit of a man which goeth upward, with the spirit of a beast which goeth downward (Eccles. iii. 21). We are not to think of the spirit as a created entity added to the physical soul, but a power communicated from God. In the brute creation there is the spirit of life. In them this seems to be the controlling power of God acting by way of instinct. It is not probably their own, though it is in them. It gives them individuality

while it is with them. When they die, it goeth downward to the earth, not as an entity belonging to whatever may be in them akin to man's soul, any substance of which we know not whether it survives their bodily life or no, but as their bodies go to the earth, so this spirit is lost. When God had formed Adam He breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

The Book of Genesis does not inform us whether man had life of any kind for any period, short or long, before this gift was given him. By this gift of the spirit of life breathed into him from God, he obtained a relation to God distinct from that of all other animals whose life came to them as part of their natural creation, and not as a subsequent gift from God by His immediate action.

The relationship to God thus formed involves a knowledge of God, a moral duty towards God, a capacity of Divine joy or pain by reason of God's Fatherhood. Man is formed to be the son of God, and by this communication of Divine life Adam was germinally and probationally the son of God.

The gift of the spirit is, therefore, closely allied with the gift of personality, the conscious relationship to God in which man has to live. He may set this aside, but he cannot alienate it. His relationship to God does not die with him. It shares the Divine eternity. It returns to God, and in death God acknowledges the individual soul as living in the truth of this relationship, or as having fallen into a state of spiritual death by violating it.

This relationship involves, therefore, responsi-

bility. It also gives the germ of higher faculties to the soul. Instinct operates in the brutes for the present time more perfectly than reason does in man; but this relationship is the groundwork of man's rational power, and the germ of that eternal wisdom to which man is called by Divine sonship, if he abides willingly in its requirements.

The relationship to God which in Adam was only germinant is substantive in Christ, for it is the relationship in which God the Son stands towards His Father in the Eternal Trinity. The uncreated relationship is manifested under the conditions of the created will, not superseding the human relationship, but strengthening it. The human relationship belongs to the perfections of the human nature as received from Adam. It becomes a substantive relationship living eternally by being taken into God. It adds nothing to the Divine relationship, but it is the instrument through which the Divine relationship operates.

We are taken into this eternal relationship by being made members of Christ in Holy Baptism. The Holy Spirit gives a substantial, vital character to the relationship which by our natural birth is one of emptiness and death.

Our Lord, therefore, in commending His Spirit to the Father, commends His Human Soul with the fulness of spiritual life and love which His Divine Person brings with it. When His Person came into the world, His Personality took possession of the Human Spirit, and brought it back from its alienation in death to a true correspondence with the Divine

life, perfect by the Divine wisdom, powerful by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of love.

Now His Soul leaves the Body, but it is still to be active by the power of the eternal Spirit. By this power He offers Himself to God, not as a helpless suppliant, but in the almighty satisfaction of eternal love. The Son of God puts off for a season the veil of outward flesh. His Spirit escapes winged with the eternal Dove to the land of rest, His own joyous home in the Bosom of the Father.

Death strikes upon other men as a penalty. Jesus has conquered death, and does not die passively like others. He commends His Spirit to the Father's Hands by His own will. He dismisses His Spirit, breathes Himself forth, hands His Spirit over to the Father. So He layeth down His life according to the commandment which He has received of the Father (John x. 18).

O Jesu, how lovingly dost Thou return unto the Father, leaving the sorrows of this lower life to enter into Thy glory! Grant me so to abide in Thy love upon the earth, that I may rejoice by Thy grace to hear the Voice of the Father calling me through death to life eternal.

My son, when I gave My Spirit over into the Father's Hands, I was not unmindful of thee. That Spirit I have now given unto thee from the Father, that thou mayest abide in the participation of My Sonship. In that act of oblation I looked forward to all who should

at any time receive through My Spirit the Spirit of adoption and grace. Yea, I looked forward to all the multitude of My redeemed, that they might be with Me in My glory.

O Jesu, how calm, how sweet, how powerful, is Thy death! How shall I praise Thee for that love wherewith Thou callest me into the joy of eternal life, to live with Thine own Self! O let Thy Spirit's witness be ever heard by me testifying to my sonship in Thy mystical Body. O let me rejoice to be dead unto the world, that I may experience the life with Thee, hidden for a time in God, hereafter to be manifest.

2. The Hands of the Father.

The Divine Sonship wherein the Manhood of Christ is glorified is itself the Right Hand of God. Exalted to that glory, His Human Nature is now the instrument of all Divine actions.

Here we have the Hands of God mentioned—an expression all the more remarkable because the Hebrew of the Psalter gives us the phrase in the singular form. Our Lord speaks with the claim of Sonship, so that He adds the invocation, 'Father.' He speaks in the fulness of the new covenant, and He uses the plural, as if there were a twofold relationship to God by which His departure from the world would be glorified.

Surely we may here find reference to the Holy Ghost. Jesus commends His Spirit not merely to

be glorified in power as the Son of God, but to be welcomed in the fulness of the Spirit of Divine love. 'By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the Breath of His Mouth.' As the Son and the Holy Ghost were participators in the primary work of creation, so do they participate in that final welcome whereby the Trinity rejoices in the glorification of the perfect manhood which is creation's crown. This manhood is the very Bride of the Canticles, who rejoiceth in the welcome of her Lord. 'His left Hand is under My head, and His right Hand doth embrace Me' (Cant. ii. 6; viii. 3). The Right Hand of Wisdom, the Left Hand of Love. The Holy Spirit sustaining the personal humanity of Christ, the Head of the Body; the Right Hand upholding the members of the Body by Divine control so as to abide in fellowship of love with Himself.

We must not think of the death of Christ as if it were an act of reluctance. His Humanity was suffering no loss, but was being taken into the glory for which it was originally predestined.

The Book of Exodus ends with the consecration of Aaron and his sons for the Priest's office by the washing and the anointing and the clothing with the holy garments. So must our Lord, as He enters upon the exercise of His High Priesthood in the Heavenly Temple, be washed from all the sins of humanity with which He was associated—washed in His own Blood, anointed with the Eternal Spirit whereby He offered Himself to God; unclothed of earthly form that He might, as the true High

Priest and King of Israel, be 'clothed with majesty and honour.'

So in calm triumph does Jesus die. The bitterness of death is past. All that belonged to the suffering life has been finished. Death was the door of a prison-house. Now it has become the gateway of a palace. The prison-house is broken open by His entrance. He goes forth 'to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.' He is 'the Dayspring from on high, who will give light to them that were in darkness and the shadow of death, and will guide our feet into the way of peace.'

He is the Kid that is carried forth to Azazel, 'bearing away the sins of the people to a land uninhabited.' The sacrifice of Himself is the sacrifice of the great Day of Atonement. His Blood shall not be sprinkled by the High Priest to consecrate a worldly sanctuary for the ministry of condemnation, but He will consecrate a sanctuary 'on the heavenly hills' where no man had yet entered, that it may be the home of God's people (Lev. xvi. 22).

Now is fulfilled the Psalm of Evening, 'I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest: for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety' (Ps. iv. 8).

O Jesu, Thou art returning to the Father. O let me always keep mine eyes attentive to behold that glory whereinto Thou now art entered, and whither

now Thou callest me. To depart and be with Thee is far better than to abide in the flesh. How can I care for this evil world when I know that at the Right Hand of the Father there are pleasures for evermore?

My son, great is the vision to which I call thee, but the way must be steep as the vision is lofty. Follow on without fear, but follow on with humility. Thou must bear the burden of the body of death until the end, but when the end comes thou shalt find that I have taken away the sting of death. So shall thy sleep be sweet.

O Lord, give me perseverance unto the end. Be Thou my Guide even unto death, yea, through death to life.

3. The Commendation.

The words quoted from the Psalmist are the words of a daily resolution. 'I commend My Spirit into Thy hand. Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, Thou God of truth. . . . I will be glad and rejoice in Thy mercy: for . . . Thou hast not shut Me up into the hand of the enemy; Thou hast set My feet in a large room' (Ps. xxxi. 5–8). The final utterance of Jesus is the summing up of His whole life. It is no after-thought. It is what He has always had before Him.

With a loud voice He called out, 'Why hast Thou forsaken Me?' Now with a loud voice He cries, giving up His Spirit to God as He expires. This commendation is the very act of expiration.

It is a voluntary act. The loudness attests that He does not die of exhaustion, but by His own will. He does not commit Himself to God's care as other men do, because death is a moment of terror. All enemies now are conquered. He hands His Spirit over to God with filial confidence, having kept it pure during His earthly life, so that He may now receive His reward.

Multitudes have died with this formula as an expression of their own impotence, relying upon Jesus as their Redeemer. Jesus uses these words as an expression of satisfaction, having shown His power as the God of truth, in that He has redeemed the humanity which He now offers, so that death can do Him no harm.

He has been acting alone, in the weaknes of the flesh. Now He will ascend to God, and act as the Son of God with power.

With a loud voice, ringing throughout all creation, Jesus separates Himself from earth, not in weakness, not in violence of effort, but in the calmness of Divine majesty.

This loud voice made the centurion recognize that He was the Son of God. He had witnessed many deaths in weakness and struggle. Never had been a death such as this. The darkness had, no doubt, filled him with awe. Now the blessedness of death fills him with wonder.

The sun had been hidden while the powers of darkness gathered round the Sun of Righteousness. Now the sun is shining upon the death of the Redeemer. Surely there never had been such a

glow of holy light since darkness was upon the face of the deep. Now is it truly to be said, 'At eventide there is light.' The setting sun looked forth on a redeemed world. What life of other men could compare with the death of Jesus! In it is summed up all the perfection of the life which went before. By it also all the acts of that life are gathered up so as to win their reward. The setting sun lights up the Cross on which the Sun of Righteousness hangs dead. That Cross shall light up the darkness of future generations.

The earthly powers of darkness quaked, and the graves of many saints were opened, for He that had the power of death is conquered (Matt. xxvii. 52).

How did the angels of heaven rejoice! for the Lord 'hath destroyed in this mountain the face of the covering that is cast over all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He hath swallowed up death for ever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces' (Is. xxv. 7, 8).

O Jesu, let me so live with Thee that Thou mayest present me unto the Father cleansed from all sin by the power of Thy precious Blood, and dead unto the world, preserved from corruption by the power of Thine Eternal Spirit.

My son, behold My dead Body which I leave behind until I come back to claim it for Resurrection. Thou must be dead unto the world after the likeness of My death, if thou wouldst be found as Mine in the Day of Resurrection yet in store.

O Jesu, Thou hast presented Thyself unto the Father with the glorious robe of Thy suffering. Let mine eyes ever be closed to every imagination of earth, that my heart may rest in the sustaining power of Thy redeeming love.

MEDITATION LXXII.

Outward Portents.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. . . . And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake; and the rocks were rent; and the tombs were opened. . . . Now the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake, and the things that were done, feared exceedingly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.—St. Matt. xxvii. 45, 51, 52, 54.

And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. . . . And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. And when the centurion, which stood by over against him, saw that he so gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.—St. Mark xv. 33, 38, 39.

And it was now about the sixth hour, and a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, the sun's light failing: and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.—St. Luke xxiii. 44, 45.

1. The Darkness.

Darkness from the sixth to the ninth hour. The sun was darkened. The light of nature failed in the midst of this great mystery. 'The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord shall come' (Joel ii. 31). So was there darkness over all the land of Egypt before Israel was delivered.

What was this supernatural darkness but a manifestation of the powers of darkness? All these powers were gathered, we may be sure, so as to assail Jesus on the Cross. If any power of darkness had been wanting, then might the conquered hosts have pleaded that they had not used all their force in attacking Jesus. But they all came round about

Him to assail Him. During the three hours they strove to shake His constancy. If the darkness of Egypt might be felt, we may be sure that this darkness was yet more terrible. It was a darkness of outward form and spiritual power. We have felt the oppression of certain atmospheric conditions. This was somewhat far beyond that. Doubtless there was the sensible feeling; but there was also a supersensible reality which oppressed the inmost soul, until at length Jesus Himself cried out, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'

The darkness was not occasioned by any withdrawal of the powers of light, as if the heavenly intelligences who rule those powers refused to gaze upon the death of Christ. The sun did not cease to shine. The darkness had its origin from below. It covered the earth. The darkness was withdrawn before the death took place. The powers by which the sun was darkened were evil powers connected with this sinful world. They rather strove in their blindness to aggravate the death of Christ, or else to turn Him aside from His steadfast purpose of dying to redeem. Already, ere He dies, does He experience that which the Psalmist tells: 'My lovers and friends hast Thou put away from Me, and Mine acquaintance are darkness' (Ps. lxxxviii. 18).

How wonderful was the tranquillity and silence of Jesus during these three hours, waiting 'until this tyranny be overpast' (Ps. lvii. 1)! O how must I wait still upon God in hours of Satan's darkest assault, remembering the darkness of hell, which could not conquer Jesus upon the Cross!

This darkness was accomplishing a great purpose of Almighty God. During these hours the Jews ought to have been preparing the lambs of the Passover, that they might kill them when three o'clock should come. This darkness, however, would make it impossible for them to go through the preliminary arrangements. The darkness could not destroy the sanctity of Christ's Body hanging on the Cross; but it was a terrible portent, spreading abomination over the Jewish feast and the worship in their Temple.

They could not, therefore, keep their Passover, although the Sanhedrists had refused to enter the Prætorium lest they should be defiled. They were more defiled by their sin than by any accidental matter which might have unfitted them to eat the Passover. They were cut off from their Passover by the just judgment of Almighty God. This darkness was a Divine excommunication of the Jewish people. It was a Divine interposition annulling the covenant of Israel, abolishing the annual commemoration, involving the central home of Jewish sanctity in the curse which fell upon their Egyptian oppressors. The better covenant is now come. The antitype of Paschal solemnities is being enacted. The people of God are being delivered from the curse of the law. God, therefore, by this intervention would overrule the assault of Satan against His only begotten Son, so as to be the overthrow of those who had made themselves the tools of the evil one. They have rejected God from being King, and He has rejected them from being His people.

O Jesu, amidst all the powers of darkness let me look to Thy Cross, that I may behold the light. The darkness of hell could not conquer Thee, nor can it hide Thee. Though my outer nature tremble in the struggle, strengthen me with Thy grace, that I may rest calmly in Thy keeping. Hear, Lord, the silence of my stricken soul, looking up to Thee. The darkness does not hide me from Thee, nor does it hide my most secret sins if I give way to their tyranny. Behold me, then, in the darkness. Sustain me with Thy powers of grace, even though I see Thee not. O dwell within my heart, to give me light and strength, however the powers of darkness may assail my outer nature. Help me in the midst of all to realize the sanctity and virtue of Thy new covenant, that I perish not through the weakness of the flesh, but may live in the power of Thy Holy Spirit.

I will be with thee, My son, at every time. Fear not, but look to Me abiding within thee. Thou shalt have light in thine inmost heart. Dwell in the light of blessed communion with Myself. Look not around thee, while the lights which this world has kindled die out before thine eyes one after another. Look to Me, and as I have sustained all My saints in their solitary struggle, so will I sustain thee.

O Jesu, Thou true Light of the world, the very Light of Light, in Thy light I shall see light, however intense may be the pressure of the darkness. Neither life nor death can separate me from the love of God, if I abide in Thee. I know that it is but for a little

while. Soon shall I find the power of Thy redemption if I remain firm unto the end. O let me follow Thee, that the darkness lead me not astray, but in Thy love I may indeed find the Light of Life.

2. The Rending of the Veil.

The veil which hung before the Holy of Holies was rent from the top to the bottom. The rending, therefore, was supernatural. It was not the result of the earthquake. The veil itself was a massive antependium, not a mere curtain.

It seems that we must attribute it to a Divine action; as if God thereby broke His way forth from His ancient sanctuary. By the darkness the nation was excommunicated, so as to be unable to keep the Passover. By the rending of the veil God signified that He left His ancient dwelling to be profaned.

It was rent from the top. This was of itself symbolical, that the rending was by the power of God, and not by any ordinary convulsion of nature. The other parts of the building would have been more likely than the veil to be broken by an earthquake.

The veil was a symbol of the flesh of Christ, hiding the Presence of the Divine nature which dwelt in His Body. That Divine nature was, as it were, loosed from the finite conditions of earthly life. The dissolution of His earthly frame was the beginning of His Divine self-manifestation. He manifested Himself as God even in the grave,

although as Man on earth that Divine Presence was hidden within Him.

Now the way into the holiest was to be opened for the faithful through the veil, that is to say, His Flesh. Not only would the flesh no longer be an impediment to the vision of God; it would be the very means of making God known. The Temple veil obscured, and it had to be done away. The veil of the flesh needed to be rent open; but its wondrous organism, formed in the image of God, would shine out with manifold glories of the indwelling Godhead, when the dulness of the outer flesh, the likeness of our sinful flesh, was dispelled. There was a mysterious glory kindling His Soul when He went down to be the Light of Paradise, although His Body waited to share that glory until the Day of Resurrection.

Thus was the way into the holiest made open, not because God had quitted it, as He had quitted the Jewish Temple, but because God welcomed in His love those who would come near to Him with the Blood of Jesus. In this Temple of Christ's humanity He would dwell for ever, for He had a delight therein.

The ministry of condemnation ended with the death of Christ. There was no longer any seclusion. The ministry of righteousness has its origin from thence; for we can draw near to God to claim the righteousness which He has perfected for us as a principle of life.

O Jesu, grant me to live so true to Thy righteous-

ness that I may indeed through Thee draw near unto the Father. O blessed death, whereby was broken not only the power of the grave to hold its victims, but the power of sin to keep us in our bondage even during life! O let me enter in through the gate which Thou hast opened. Let me die along with Thee to all the tyrants that have held me down. Let every faculty of my nature be so consecrated to Thee, that through Thee I find Divine freedom to accomplish the Divine will.

My son, come unto the Father by Me, and thou shalt not be cast out. Draw nigh with loving faith. I have broken the tyrant's power, and if thou wilt conform thyself to Me as the Spirit teacheth, thou shalt find My freedom.

Dear Lord, I come to Thee and through Thee to the Father. I gaze upon Thee with adoring love, and long to be conformed to Thee, that so in the activity of a true Divine life I may know Thy glory. The veil is rent, and all dark and empty things are done away. O blessed rending of the veil! In Thee the fulness of Divine light and truth shine out with loving invitation to Thy redeemed.

3. The Earthquake.

The rending of the veil is a symbol of the opened Heaven. The death of Christ opens to the faithful the way into the holiest. The earthquake is a manifestation of the shaking of the powers of darkness that the prisoners might be set free.

The Holy of Holies was but an empty symbol.

The Shekinah which had dwelt in the sanctuary in early days had long since been withdrawn. God's Presence, manifest by the rending, was manifested in wrath, not in abiding love. But in the earthquake the powers of darkness were shaken with a terrible reality. They had gathered round the Cross, and were now fled to their abode. There they had the spirits of the dead detained in bondage, good and bad. When the Soul of Jesus descended as Liberator, their dread powers lost their hold. The earthquake opened the tombs. There the bodies of their prisoners lay exposed to sight. The evil one had his kingdom of the dead shaken to its basis by the descent of the Soul of Jesus.

The way into the dark prison-house was open before. All could enter in, but none return. Now the way is opened out of that prison. Soon shall Jesus, who descends, return again. He shall not return alone. The return, however, belongs to the volume of the Resurrection. Now at His death the graves are opened, although none of the saints can rise until Jesus, as the Firstfruits, rises in His glory.

What Paschal feast in Jerusalem has ever known such physical phenomena as were crowded into the evening-tide of this great day?

The Temple was laid bare for ever. It never would know any fresh dedication. Nor would Satan ever again be able to assert his power as he had done in former times. Even though he be loosed in the last ages of Christendom to deceive the nations, he will never be able to hold them down under the same tyranny. Those who cling to Jesus shall ever

find Him their 'very present Help in trouble' (Ps. xlvi. 1).

O for grace to live in the power of this victory! 'Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ' (1 Cor. xv. 57). The earthquake must open to the view of faith the desolated realm from which the soul that is steadfast has nothing more to fear. But still must the soul feel the earth as it were quaking continually. The outward course of events goes on as before. The soul must feel that every earthly thing has been shaken, so that nothing of earth remains secure; remembering, too, that there is a final earthquake yet in store. 'This time I shake not earth only, but also heaven.' How must we live in the shelter of the calm Soul of Jesus, so that when all things round are shaken, we may abide in Him unshaken, and may remain in the eternal security of His love!

Satan may deceive the nations, but he cannot now bind the unwilling. How watchfully must I walk in the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free, abiding in the truth of His kingdom! If the blessed souls rejoiced that their sepulchres were opened, waiting to follow Christ in the resurrection, how must I rejoice that the prison-house of evil passions has been unbarred, and that Satan cannot claim me if I do not yield to him! What though I have to wait a while on earth, and Satan seems to domineer as if he could force me into subjection! Let it not be! As I have given my members servants to uncleanness unto iniquity, so now to righteousness unto holiness. The grave is opened,

though the bodies cannot yet rise in glory. So let me live in the world, as freed from sin, though I have to wait for Christ to be glorified in His saints at the last day, ere my body can rise in His glory. The death of the body to the world of sense is a small matter. The freedom of the whole nature, buried with Christ and dead to sin, but yet awaiting resurrection, must fill my heart with thanksgiving. Only this deadness needs to be accepted with a perfect heart.

O Jesu, who didst proclaim the glad tidings of deliverance to the captives with whom Thou didst abide, until Thou didst raise them from the grave, make me to rejoice in Thy freedom, though I have yet to wait in fleshly weariness. Let not the corruption of the flesh triumph over me, though the weakness of the flesh still holds me down.

Remember My presence with thee, My son! My strength shall be made perfect in thy weakness. Thou feelest how weak thou art when temptations come upon thee. Remember that I have taken thee into the fellowship of My Body, and thou art not lying in the grave as the victim of corruption, but as the evidence of My triumph. Abide in Me, and live not to the world. So shall Satan be unable to force thee to sin. Of thyself thou art dead, and corruption shall consume thee, but in Me thou hast the security of a hidden life communicated from Myself, and holiness shall keep thee.

O Lord Jesu, Thou hast opened the grave. Here let me lie, if only I can feel assured that Thou livest in my dead body. I know it shall not be long. Soon shall I see Thee coming in Thy glory, and if I have continued as Thine in my weakness, I shall be Thine when Thy glory is revealed.

MEDITATION LXXIII.

Jesus Dead upon the Cross.

The Jews therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross upon the sabbath (for the day of that sabbath was a high *day*), asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. The soldiers therefore came, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him: but when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs; howbeit one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and straightway there came out blood and water. And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe. For these things came to pass, that the scripture might be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.—St. John xix. 31-37.

1. The Divine Presence.

The Lord of life is dead. His Body hangs upon the Cross. The Soul is gone to the spirits in prison. Yet the Divine Presence forsakes not the lifeless Form. It has a life within it which no other living being at that moment possessed. The natural death of the human Body does not destroy the reality of the Divine indwelling. Calmly it remains, secure from corruption in that Divine custody. Indeed, without this submission to out ward death, we should have failed to appreciate the efficacy of that Divine life. We should have thought that the integrity of human capacity was needful if the Divine fellowship was to be perfect. No. The union between Godhead and Manhood is perfect, although there be a suspension of union between

Body and Soul. The Personality of Him who wrought such great miracles was the same as it was before He assumed that Body wherein He wrought them, and it still remains the same although the Body is incapable of being the co-operative instrument of His Divine power.

Surely there will be some miracles wrought through this Body, if the Divine Presence be there! No. The Divine Presence is a hidden Presence under this condition of death. Death would not be the reality which it is if miracles were wrought thereby. Indeed, it is one great evidence of the truth of the Gospel story that no such miracles are alleged. One who had invented the narrative would surely have thought that as Elisha's body wrought a miracle in the grave, much more ought the Body of Jesus so to do. Yet the narrative leaves death in complete possession. The body of Elisha effected a miracle, because God wrought thereby; but the Body of Jesus works no miracle, for Jesus has submitted His Body to the condition of death, and He is the Divine Agent through whom all miracles are wrought. If, therefore, He were to break the frosty crust of death which binds down His Body, He would be using it for the purposes of His own living will. He had power to call twelve legions of angels to His defence, but He did not. He had power to make His Sacred Body the centre of countless healings while multitudes flocked around His Cross, but He did not. Such action would have violated the condition under which He came into the world to suffer and die. Christ's Body and Soul were not to be mere

instruments of Divine power. They were to be in their combined integrity the moral instrument of obedience to the Divine will. Their actions, however, were to be human actions, although possessing Divine power. They were to be acts of, and by, the human will. Had the Divine power used the Body for a miraculous display now that the human will was no longer there, the moral truth of the human voluntary obedience would have been obscured, even if it had not been rendered null and void.

The Soul is gone to Hades. There the Soul can act with the reality of the human will, for it is 'quickened'—kept in active life—'by the Spirit.' The Soul of the dead Saviour is gone to hold intercourse with the souls of departed patriarchs and others; to proclaim to them the good tidings of their ancient hopes being now accomplished; to deliver them from their bondage. He delivers them from this bondage by being bound Himself.

How little did those who were round about the Cross realize the work which the Soul of Jesus was doing at that time! He was gone, indeed, to awaken the spirits out of their sleep, that they might rise with their bodies, and be partakers of His Resurrection.

O, if we could know what is happening now in the heavenly Jerusalem on high, how different would be our estimate of the events which take place in this world of death around us! Compare the joy of the blessed in Paradise whom the penitent thief will soon be called to join, with the dismay of the disciples on earth, who could not let their imaginations

reach beyond their eyesight. O let us walk by faith, and not by sight.

O Jesu, Thou callest us now to submit to death even as Thyself. Let not our hearts be anxious to act with triumph in this world which Thou hast quitted. Enable us here so willingly to submit to the bondage of death that we be not drawn back into the slavery of sin, but may have our portion with Thee in the hidden life whereinto Thou art leading us after Thee.

My son, it is a blessed thing to be completely dead unto the world. My grace is a power ever leading thee forward if thou will be dead to the world, but thy progress in the better life can only be if thou abide with Me in deadness to the world around. Do not even desire for Me the things of earth. All power is given Me over them, because I have died to them.

O Lord, how difficult it is to realize that death is the only true life! Indeed, my soul is ever desirous to live with Thee. Yet is my fleshly heart continually turning back to things of earth, forgetting that Thou hast left them, and that Thy work is best done without them. O let me be dead with Thee, that I may live with Thee, and work in Thee, and glorify Thee.

2. The Legs not broken.

So was the protection of God manifested to the Heir of prophecy. 'A bone of Him shall not be broken' (Ps. xxxiv. 20). This was the utterance of

God by the Psalmist; and as He is the Paschal Lamb who hangs upon the Cross, the condition of the Paschal lamb must be fulfilled in Him. The lamb was to be roasted whole. 'Ye shall not break a bone thereof' (Exod. xii. 46). This involved the roasting of the Lamb cruciform. The fire, of course, is the symbol of the Holy Ghost. The lamb was not to be eaten raw, for human nature could be no acceptable offering to God save through the Holy Ghost. Neither should it be sodden with water. Water is the symbol of cleansing and onflow. The offering of Christ was naturally pure, so that it needed no cleansing. His Baptism was in His own Blood. Since the Holy Ghost came down on the Apostles, we are baptized with water, which symbolizes the communication of the Holy Ghost flowing on from them to us. But He comes to us from the Person of Jesus. In the Heart of Jesus He springs up as an eternal principle of life proceeding from His Divine Person. It was not fitting, therefore, that Jesus should undergo any preparatory cleansing in order to receive this gift. The Holy Ghost was inalienably inherent in Himself. He was baptized by John not in order to receive the Holy Ghost, but in order to sanctify water by His own act. The Holy Ghost was manifested there, proceeding from Himself as the Word of the Father; but He was not given through the water as when we are baptized. The burning of the lamb was, however, necessary to symbolize the entire taking up of the Manhood into God. This is the work of the Holy Ghost.

Behold, then, the Lamb of God who has offered

Himself by the power of the indwelling Spirit. That Holy Spirit sanctifies not merely His actions as He might have sanctified the acts of faithful men before Christ came. The Holy Ghost sanctifies His Body, His whole nature, penetrating it as with the fire of God.

We are not to think of the Holy Ghost as abiding in Him to consume, but to preserve. Our fleshly bodies are to be consumed by the Holy Ghost by reason of our sinfulness. They have to be burnt out of us, that the Body of Christ may take their place. The Body of Christ abides with a holy fragrance of Divine merit, which ascends and pleads with God from the Cross whereon He hangs. The Holy Ghost protects His Body. Therefore no bone of Him shall be broken, even though man may intend to break them. Jesus was dead already. He had given up His Spirit in triumph to the Father, and His Body is safe from injury in His Father's keeping.

O how safe is the Church—how safe are we—if we are resting in the protection of the Father's promised care!

O Jesu, grant that I may always rest secure in the keeping of the Father. While I am alive to the world, I am alway likely to suffer harm from the world; but if I am dead with Thee, the world cannot harm me.

Rely not upon any protection that the world can give. If thou think to defend thyself thereby, thou will surely perish. But if thou art dead, the world cannot make thee stumble, nor

show thee insult, but thou shalt walk in the Light of Life.

Help me thus to be nailed to Thy Cross, most blessed Jesu. Thy promises are unfailing. In Thy keeping only can I be safe.

3. The Pierced Side.

'One of the soldiers with a spear pierced the Side of Jesus, and forthwith came there out Blood and Water.' They find Him dead; but lest this seeming death should be only a faint, one of the soldiers, to make sure, pierces His Side. This act was not a sudden thought. The soldiers would do the same to the bodies of the thieves after their legs were broken. It was the concluding act of the process. Only in the case of Jesus they omitted the preliminary fracture. As He was dead there was no need. Still the piercing must take place in order to avoid all risk. This was ordered of God so as to fulfil the words of prophecy, 'They shall look on Him whom they pierced;' rather, 'Me whom they pierced' (Zech. xii. 10). This piercing is one of the attestations of God Himself who spake by the prophets.

God had opened the side of Adam to take thence of his substance, therewith to build up the body of Eve. Now the spear of the Roman soldier opens the Side of the Incarnate God, the Second Adam. Deep was the sleep of Adam. The Second Adam is hushed in the deeper sleep of death. His Soul is in the depth of the earth with the spirits of the departed.

The previous effusions of Blood, how painful have they been! This piercing of the Side brings with it no pain. 'Forthwith came there out Blood and Water.' By this Blood and Water the Church, the Second Eve, is formed from the sacred Side of the Divine Sleeper.

It would seem as if the greater part of the Precious Blood had been emptied out of the holy Body of the Redeemer, in order that He might thus acquire for Himself His Church by the small remains of Blood which thus came from His Heart. The Blood had ceased to circulate through the Body of Christ. The small quantity remaining about the Heart, now dead, is to be the fountain of supernatural life, the Fountain opened for all sin and uncleanness.

It is useless to inquire what physical truth may be evidenced by this flowing forth of the sacred Blood. Medical science cannot speak with sufficient certainty even in the present day to make this wonder an evidence of any physical truth connected with our Lord's death. It must be accepted as an event which is recorded simply for the purposes of Divine Mystery. It was in itself supernatural. As the birth of Isaac from the body of Abraham, now dead, was supernatural, so was the Birth of the Second Eve from the Body of the Second Adam, hanging in death.

The Blood was coagulated as it flowed forth along with watery Serum. It was not only the more liquid Serum which flowed; the Blood flowed out also, which from a dead body was supernatural.

Therefore the Apostle speaks of the wonder—He came not by Water only, but by Water and Blood.

It was the power of the Holy Ghost which caused this flow of Blood, the Spirit of life still operating in His Body, naturally lifeless. The Spirit beareth witness. Blood and water from a dead body could be of no avail. The Spirit was still operative in that dead Body, for it was the Body of Christ. It lost not the Divine unction by reason of death. The Spirit, therefore, was the moving principle which caused this Blood and Water to flow, in order thereby to form the Church by sacramental regeneration.

The two great sacraments of the Gospel are, therefore, set before us in this mystery. The Water of Baptism, the Body and Blood of the Holy Eucharist; and then, again, the mingled Blood of the Holy Eucharist, not the Blood as it was in life, but Blood which by death has been separated into the two parts, so that in order to exhibit the Lord's death water is mingled with the wine in the Holy Eucharist,—all these, not as lifeless relics, but having still within them the mysterious Life, the life-giving power, of the Holy Ghost, testify to the death of Christ as a source of life. 'These three bear witness in earth' to the departed Lord as the Redeemer of mankind.

So began to be fulfilled what our Lord had said, 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit' (John xii. 24). The seed which passes through the corruption of individual death does not

really die, so that the principle of life is lost. The individual dies. The specific life comes forth in a new form, multiplying itself. So does nature set forth the death of Christ. He is hanging there in individual death, but the Holy Ghost within Him is a principle which sustains the Christ-Life of the Second Adam — that life which death could not destroy. The elements of that humanity which perish not in death shall be communicated to the faithful, and raise them up to share in the Christ-Life by the power of the indwelling Spirit.

O Lord Jesu, grant that I may ever live true to the sanctifying power of Thy most precious Body and Blood. In vain hadst Thou given Thy life for me, unless Thou hadst given Thy life to me also. Grant me so to reflect upon the mysterious communication of this higher life by Thy Holy Spirit from Thy holy Heart, that I may walk in its regenerating influence, and my sinful body may be made clean by Thy Body, and my soul washed through Thy most precious Blood.

Yea, My son, I desire to live on and work in the world through thee and all whom I call to share My death. If thou wouldst attain to see Me in the glory of My Resurrection, thou must show Me forth as living in the humiliation of thine earthly life. Thou must bear about in thy body the marks of My death, and testify to the power of My grace.

Lord Jesu, few were the drops which came from

Thy pierced Side, but by the power of the Holy Ghost their living power is multiplied for all the multitude of Thine elect. What a mighty power comes forth from Thy wounded Side! In that power let me indeed lie hidden, that in my outward form that mighty power may be manifest. Jesu, Thou hast died, and art alive for evermore. O with Thee let me abide in death, that I also may live for evermore with Thee in the life of the redeemed.

NOTE.

Breaking the legs hastened the death of persons who were crucified, because it prevented their lifting themselves up, as they would otherwise do. Such upraising of the body was intensely painful, but yet it gave a necessary relief for the action of the heart. Life would be continued for two or three days if the criminal were left to die of exhaustion, because the vital organs of the body were not injured. When, however, he could no longer raise himself upon the projection which formed a seat, his death would quickly follow. It then was an act of mercy to pierce the side, and save the dying man from the small remnant of his living misery.

The Romans commonly left the bodies to die, and then to be devoured by birds and other animals. They never buried on the day of execution. The Jews desired that bodies should not hang upon the tree over night, because of the Mosaic law. They were especially solicitous to avoid such an abomination when it would have caused the profanation of a religious feast such as the Passover.

The frequency of crucifixion, with all these attendant circumstances, gives a special importance to St. John's mention of the Blood and Water. This outflow from the Side of Jesus was altogether abnormal. St. John saw that it was a Divine mystery. It was a result of the presence of the Holy

Ghost, preserving the dead Body of Christ from that corruption which would attend the dissolution of ordinary men.

We must remember that the Holy Ghost filled the dead Body of Christ with a Divine vitality. The Godhead was equally present with Body and Soul during their time of separation, and that presence was the work of God the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

It has been noticed that all the Evangelists carefully avoid saying that Christ 'died.' He died by His own act and will, and not by the result of any external physical necessity. The Evangelists always speak of His 'giving up the ghost,' 'expiring.'

Had He died by any natural cause, He would have failed in the act of Redemption. A treatise has been written with great ability to show that Jesus died of a broken heart. But had His heart broken under the trial of His Passion, it would have shown that He had not strength sufficient to fulfil what was required of Him. We may, therefore, at once set aside any attempt to trace out the natural causes of His death. 'No man taketh My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself' (John x. 18).

It has been said that rupture of the heart would account for several details of our Lord's dying moments, especially the loud cry, and the separation of the Blood into *cruor* and *serum;* but, after all, it is very uncertain how far such identity of symptoms can be proved.

Even if it were proved, we must remember that our Lord's loud cry was not the convulsive cry such as might precede the rupture of the heart. It was the calm utterance of the Saviour triumphantly committing His Spirit into the Hands of the Father. There was no excitement of sensation about that cry.

Jesus had already spoken the word, 'It is finished.' If anything yet remained for Him to endure beyond what He could bear, it would be plain that the struggle with evil was not finished, and that, after all, it was the evil power which would gain the mastery.

Jesus did not say, 'I thirst,' in order to gain strength

for His last struggle by any physical refreshment. He did, indeed, suffer through our human weakness, but He always had resources of strength within Himself, so that He could rise out of that weakness. 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.'

The flow of Blood and Water must not be confounded with anything that might result from the corruption of the blood under the circumstances of ordinary crucifixion when attended with a broken heart. Those who would maintain this are forced to allow that the time elapsing since the death was not really what would be ordinarily required for such corruption to take place.

We must accept this phenomenon, which was probably a dissolution of the Blood into its component parts, as being the operation of the Holy Ghost, making the dissolution complete, but preserving the Blood of Jesus from any corruption. Corruption would not have acted so speedily nor so completely. Corruption is not the mere chemical dissolution of the blood into its component parts, so that they shall remain *clear* and *distinct*. By corruption the constituent elements are gathered together in fresh and faulty combinations, and being thus unhealthily united, they have a tendency to generate from themselves corrupt forms of life. The supernatural dissolution of our Lord's Blood into the clear water and the thick clots of other matter showed that no corruption was taking place. It could not have happened as it did by any natural process, however much the natural process may in some respects resemble this phenomenon. St. John evidently felt that what he was recording was a Divine mystery. He recognized the action of the Spirit with the Water and the Blood. He regarded it with reference to future mysteries above nature, not to any physical cause. He regarded it not as the beginning of corruption which should generate foulness, but as the work of the indwelling Spirit by which the Divine life of the Body of Christ should be given to His Church.

MEDITATION LXXIV.

The Spectators.

And many women were there beholding from afar, which had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.—St. Matt. xxvii. 55, 56.

And there were also women beholding from afar: among whom *were* both Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; who, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him; and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.—St. Mark xv. 40, 41.

And all the multitudes that came together to this sight, when they beheld the things that were done, returned smiting their breasts. And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed with him from Galilee, stood afar off, seeing these things.—St. Luke xxiii. 48, 49.

1. The Soldiers.

There were soldiers watching the bodies which hung upon the crosses, to prevent their being taken away. They would not venture to leave until life was extinct.

Probably the centurion who had superintended the crucifixion would himself have gone away. He at least had felt the power of Christ in death. Many a one had he seen upon the cross, but the cry with which Jesus died had been unlike anything that he had witnessed before.

The Jews sent to ask Pilate that the legs might be broken, so that the bodies might be removed. Orders, therefore, came that this should be done. Jesus was dead already. They, therefore, brake not His legs, but a soldier with a spear pierced His

side. This was not an act of wantonness. It followed upon the breaking of the legs of the crucified. We may well think that a strange sense of homage held even these soldiers back from the unnecessary brutality of breaking the legs of Jesus with a club. They must pierce His side in order to ensure His being dead before they went away.

How strange it is to think of the Body of Jesus being thus in the hands of these rude soldiers! Yet we seem to feel that all the wonders of this day have not been altogether lost upon them.

They would be round the Cross. We know, also, that many came out to that sight who, 'when they beheld the things that were done, smote their breasts and returned.' They felt the terror of such deeds of violence, but they did not feel the love of Him that suffered. They returned to Jerusalem, of which so long ago the great prophet had said, 'Righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers.' How has this character of Israel been developed now to the full! 'They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, they are gone away backward' (Is. l. 4).

These multitudes are, indeed, shaken with a transient penitence, but they return to the old city. Would that they did not return to their old ways! Doubtless some were really prepared by these events to receive the message from Heaven at the ensuing Pentecost, as also many of the priests were prepared to accept the faith by the things which they in particular witnessed in the Temple. So does God use the stormiest times for the individual discipline

of souls. Only we must take heed to the things which the events of our day reveal to us. They produce not their effect of their own selves. Secretly God deals with us, one by one, and we must not be content to take our estimate of His judgments from the world round about us, returning to the world to be with the world. While we contemplate the wickedness of the ungodly, seeming to carry out their aims, we must 'go into the sanctuary of God and there consider the end of these men' (Ps. lxxiii. 17).

O Jesu, the soldiers watched around Thy Cross and saw Thee give Thy Spirit into the Father's Hands. By Thy Cross let me stand, that amidst all the trials of Thy Church I may recognize Thy Divine Presence while Thou dost present Thy people to the Father, that their death may be dear to Him through the fellowship of Thy sufferings.

Open thine eyes, My son, to behold the mysteries of the higher life to which by My Cross I call thee. Thou art My soldier. Thou art set for My defence in the world. The soldiers had charge of My dead Body. But do thou guard with tender love the Church, which is My Body, living with the life which by My death was given to her.

O Jesu, Thy Side was opened by man's sinful scorn, but Thy Divine love ruled their actions in spite of their sin. So shall it ever be. Do Thou, therefore, grant me, amidst the enmity of the world, to rely always

upon Thy sovereign love, which shall make all the efforts of the enemy turn to the greater manifestation of Thy grace for Thine elect.

2. The Women afar off.

The crowds had gone away, terror-stricken by the darkness. The soldiers still kept guard. There is a company standing afar off, a number of women who had followed Jesus from Galilee. Not, however, only women. St. Luke says, 'all His acquaintance.'

They stood afar off. Probably not from fear, but to avoid immediate contact with the rough crowd whom the Sanhedrists were urging on to blaspheme Christ. A company of friends, who would be unable to come close to the Cross because of the military guard, would stand in preference behind the insolent multitude, where they could see all that was being done. Jesus had addressed these women when they followed Him along the way of sorrows. Doubtless they waited for some demonstration of His power, which would be as effectual to them standing within sight as if they had been nearer.

People often speak as if St. John were the only man of His friends who was there. Apparently women were the larger number, but certainly some men. Was not Joseph of Arimathæa watching? Did not Lazarus come? Peter could not perhaps find entrance to the Prætorium; but we can scarcely think that he who waited to see the end had contented himself with so shallow a penitence, such an ineffectual flood of tears, that he gave up all

personal association with our blessed Lord for the remainder of the day.

They could not help. They all stood afar off in utter impotence. Apparently there were just a few who stood closer to the Cross. St. John was there, with the holy Mother, and his own mother Salome, Mary the wife of Clopas, who may have been brother to our Lord's foster-father, and Mary Magdalene.

It is possible that these, as the immediate relations of our Lord, may have had some standing-place permitted them, although the surging crowd would not allow of the rest.

Jesus had seen them standing by, and had spoken the words commending His mother to the care of the beloved disciple as a son. Apparently these two had gone away before the darkness. The disciple took her to his own home.

What must have been his sense of awe as he returned to Calvary, and the darkness probably came over him on the way! When he left the Cross, we may suppose that the three women had joined the larger company. They would not wish to remain in so prominent a position as before, now that the two leading members of the little circle were gone away.

Think, then, of our Lord's friends watching through the darkness. O what expectation! Yet they would be told of the farewell to His mother, even if they could not hear it. This would make them feel that all was now at an end. The meek, obedient calmness and self-possession with which she had allowed St. John to lead her away, would

speak to them as an exhortation to rely upon the Divine goodness, whatever the immediate issue of events might be. But O, what overwhelming sadness was theirs! The darkness came and went. Their sadness still remained, darkening their hearts. The sun shone out again. The Cross appears again in full view. They hear the two loud cries. The centurion felt the power of that last cry greater than the earthquake which attended it. Did not they feel it? The other words probably could scarcely be heard by them. How would these cries penetrate their hearts, as in their awful majesty they rose up to God in heaven!

They saw the people dwindle away when all was over. All over! Yes. All was over for the multitude, but not for them. How can they tear themselves from the Cross of Jesus their Lord! O let us stand along with them! Here is the Home of my heart. Jesus, though He be dead, is still our Redeemer, our Home, our Life for evermore.

O Jesu, while I stand afar off I cannot enter into the mysteries of Thy redeeming love. The world is gone away, and Thou callest Thy people near. Lifted up upon the Cross, Thou drawest us unto Thyself from all nations of the world. No power of men can now keep us standing aloof. We come to Thy Cross, and Thy death speaks to us in living words of imperishable love. All other words of living men are words of death! O blessed death, transformed into eternal life! Great, great is the peace which fills my soul amidst the emptiness of earth, when I think of the multitudes of

those who are gone before, who rest in the vision of Thy countenance! That same vision subdues every sorrow, sanctifies all suffering, saves from sin.

My son, thou must indeed abide with My Cross. Yea, thou must take My Cross along with thee whithersoever thou goest. Thou hast seen that I have triumphed over the powers of evil by dying. Fear not to follow Me. Return not from My Cross to find a home in the earthly Jerusalem. Follow Me through the gateway of death to My Father's house.

Yea, Lord! The shadow of death is ever over me, but Thy rod and Thy staff shall be my comfort.

3. St. John.

The beloved disciple had taken to his house the blessed Mother, there apparently to wait until the third day should come. Not that they knew fully what that third day should be. Only they who loved Jesus must wait. Mystery was spread over everything. A true faith still looked for Jesus, knowing that it looked not in vain.

St. John had returned before the end. He was present when the soldier pierced the Side of Jesus. He watched the stream of Blood and Water which came so mysteriously from the wound.

How that great mystery filled his heart! Afterwards, when he wrote his Epistle, he considered how Christ, who came forth by Water and Blood, comes to us still in the Water and in the Blood; for by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body, and are all

made to drink into one Spirit. Knowing the sacramental action of Christ by His Spirit in His Body, the Church, He looked back and recognized the wound of Calvary as opening the stream of sacramental life. At the time he could not understand what that mysterious stream of twofold influence from the Heart of Jesus signified. Yet he knew that it pointed onward to some development of heavenly power. He could read it as testifying to the abiding life of his Lord, by the power of the Holy Ghost, as the Son of God. It was no merely physical result of some bodily function. It was a Divine mystery; 'and he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.'

He would not fail to call to mind how the water came out of the rock which Moses smote when the children of Israel strove with God, and 'tempted Him, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not?' (Exod. xvii. 7.)

Alas, what a terrible Meribah is this! Moses smote the rock that he might give the people to drink. Now it is the spear of an alien who smites 'the Rock, the Redeemer' of Israel (Ps. xix. 14). This is 'He that should come,' and He is come. This is the Heir, whose death the husbandmen have compassed; but now He is come to institute a better covenant, of which they can no longer be partakers. He is coming in grace, and they cannot see Him. But wait awhile. 'Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him' (Rev. i. 7).

O Jesu, open mine eyes to recognize the mysteries of Thy truth, that I may so meditate upon them as to drink and be refreshed at the fountain of Divine knowledge. So teach me to know the grace which flows from Thy wounds, that in all the struggles of this weary life I may rejoice to share the wounds of Thy grace.

My son, as I call thee to suffer, so will I teach thee more and more. Thou canst not learn the glory of My life save in the school of My Passion. If I permit thee to be in any way My representative in suffering, thou must joyfully accept it as thy truest honour. How have I loved thee, in suffering for thee! So learn to love Me by suffering for Me. So when I come again thou shalt enter into the joy of thy Lord.

Dear Lord, how great are Thy promises! How true is Thy Word! Whatever be the cup which Thou givest me to drink, I am sure Thou wilt make all bitterness to be sweet by the virtue of Thy holy Cross. Truly Thou comest in ways that I could not have looked for, and Thou comest to give Thy faithful people grace beyond all earthly measure for the life of Thy kingdom.

MEDITATION LXXV.

The Burial.

And when even was come, there came a rich man from Arimathæa, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: this man went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded it to be given up. And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre. — St. Matt. xxvii. 57-61.

And when even was now come, because it was the Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, there came Joseph of Arimathæa, a councillor of honourable estate, who also himself was looking for the kingdom of God; and he boldly went in unto Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he learned it of the centurion, he granted the corpse to Joseph. And he bought a linen cloth, and taking him down, wound him in the linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of a rock; and he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the *mother* of Joses beheld where he was laid. — St. Mark xv. 42-47.

And behold, a man named Joseph, who was a councillor, a good man and a righteous (he had not consented to their counsel and deed), a *man* of Arimathæa, a city of the Jews, who was looking for the kingdom of God: this man went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. And he took it down, and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb that was hewn in stone, where never man had yet lain. And it was the day of the Preparation, and the sabbath drew on. And the women, which had come with him out of Galilee, followed after, and beheld the tomb, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments.

And on the sabbath they rested according to the commandment. — St. Luke xxiii. 50-56.

And after these things Joseph of Arimathæa, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked of Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came therefore, and took away his body. And there came also Nicodemus, he who at the first came to him by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound *weight*. So they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid. There then because of the Jews' Preparation (for the tomb was nigh at hand) they laid Jesus. — St. John xix. 38-42.

1. Joseph of Arimathæa.

Isaiah had prophesied that Christ should make His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death. The former clause has been fulfilled in

His crucifixion. The latter must be fulfilled in His burial.

Joseph had a tomb hewn out for himself in the garden adjoining to Calvary. How little did he contemplate the purpose to which it would be put! We may well believe that, in the arrangements for his own burial, he had been acting in a spirit of prayerfulness. His prayer has been more than answered. The place which he had intended as a resting-place in death becomes to him a cradle of life. It is impossible to say how far he may have had an expectation that Messiah would come to him in the grave to raise him to life. Messiah has come, and from the grave He will come again, bringing with Himself the gift of life everlasting.

Joseph was a rich man. We are not to think that this is specified merely as an incident confirming the prophecy. As Christ's death along with malefactors symbolized His dying for the sins of mankind, some of whom would repent and profit by His death, while others would still scoff and reject Him, so His being buried by rich men symbolizes the blessedness of those in whom His burial should be perpetuated and His resurrection exhibited. He was buried in the grave of Joseph, and truly they are rich who are buried in the grave of Jesus. The riches of earth can only avail to buy a sepulchre. The true riches avail in the sepulchre for the attainment of everlasting life. Joseph bought a sepulchre for Jesus. Jesus by His own merits has acquired a sepulchre for Joseph, which shall be a home of life. The riches whereby it has been acquired furnish it with

glorious prerogatives, so that those who lie down therein are called to 'a glorious inheritance in the saints.'

One Joseph was the guardian of Mary, the blessed Mother. Another Joseph provided the tomb when Jesus should come forth as by a second birth from the heart of the earth.

One Ramah wailed over the death of the children slain at Bethlehem. Another Ramah was the home of him who now provides the gateway of deliverance whereby the children of Rachel shall come again to their own border, and a new progeny be born as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem.

The name 'Joseph' seems to have a double signification according to the punning etymology so frequent in Hebrew names. It signifies 'reproach' which was taken away, and 'addition' in the hope of future increase. How truly do these significations apply both to the foster-father, and to him who shared the reproach of Christ in His death, and the hope of Christ's resurrection!

Joseph the Patriarch had been sold to Ishmaelitish merchantmen, going down with spices to Egypt. Now, He of whom Joseph was a type, 'separate from His brethren,' has been sold by those who were 'the children of Abraham after the flesh,' that He may go down to the Egypt of the grave. Those men of old were trafficking with balm from Gilead. Jesus goes down to the greater Egypt, and fills the grave of Joseph with the balm of a better Gilead, as a Physician (Jer. viii. 22) really capable of 'healing the hurt of the daughter of my people.'

Is not Jerusalem become as Egypt? And does not the greater Joseph make Egypt the home of a better glory, when He will reign over the true family of Abraham who come to take refuge with Him?

Joseph was a counsellor, one of the Sanhedrists, who had not assented to the deed of the Jewish court. In what way he had shown his dissent we cannot say; and without more knowledge of facts, it seems to be scarcely right that we should accuse him of timidity, beyond what St. John's words imply, that for fear of the Jews he had kept his discipleship a secret.

At any rate, now he comes forward. He went in boldly to Pilate and asked for the Body of Jesus. It could not be taken from the Cross without the Governor's leave. He was hanging there apparently under a charge of treason. This made the request seem hopeless. But Pilate felt in his heart that the charge of treason was futile. Anxious as he had been to avoid passing the unjust sentence, he must have trembled at the darkness and the earthquake which so evidently associated themselves with his great crime. His wonder is enhanced by hearing that Jesus is 'dead so long;' that He was dead without the natural process of breaking His legs like the others. He would feel that it was a relief to have in some way got rid of the Body round which such marvels were centred. He would be pleased that one of the Sanhedrists was not carried away by the same envy which seemed to madden the whole council. His compliance was just that sort of half-reparation which men are ready to make when they

feel without true penitence the burden of some great crime.

How great must have been the holy joy with which Joseph returned to Calvary, to pay the last honours, however seemingly useless, to the Body of Jesus! He was 'looking for the kingdom of God,' and upon the Cross was the announcement of the King.

O Jesu, who didst condescend to occupy the tomb of Joseph, and still more wonderfully hast condescended to bury me with Thine own Self, grant that I may confess Thee boldly before men, and, being dead to all the riches of this world, may live as Thy disciple in the glory of Thy heavenly kingdom.

My son, thou must be wholly dead to the world if thou wouldst be buried with Me. Yea, thy home in the world must be a sepulchre if it is to be the home of holy hope. My sepulchre is the home of Resurrection, and those who are buried with Me must look for earthly things to die, not in failure, but in triumph. That which abides in My death shall live eternally. That which exults in a life that must be lost can gain no other life when this present time is passed away.

O Lord Jesu, Thou art the true, the only Counsellor. Thy sepulchre is the only home of my heart. There alone can I find my portion with Thy saints. There alone can I experience the joy of Thy kingdom. Truly Thou hast conquered the grave, and those who

are buried with Thee learn by faith to rejoice in Thy victory.

2. Nicodemus.

Nicodemus was another wealthy Sanhedrist. How must these two men have felt during the stormy meeting at which Jesus was condemned, when it must have been plain to them that no interference on their part would be of any avail! Whether they showed their dissent by absence or silence, we do not know. Nicodemus does not seem to have been a thorough disciple, although he was certainly convinced of the Divine mission of Jesus. So, doubtless, were many of 'the rulers and Pharisees' (John vii. 48). At his first interview he said to Jesus, 'We know that Thou art a Teacher come from God,' joining others with himself in the conviction. There would be many degrees of adhesion between the acceptance of His prophetic mission and of His Divine Messianic claims.

Now the court have practically forced him away from all compromise. He could not join in their condemnation. The companionship of Joseph and the court-sessions of this great Friday have ripened the faith which was so slow in its development.

He may have been a man of more learning than Joseph. Our Lord speaks of him as 'the [well-known] teacher of Israel.' At least such is the apparent meaning of the words. If so, he may be taken as illustrating the dangers which beset an intellectual leader—the hesitation which such a one

exhibits with reference to truths of which his heart is convinced, if, however, they endanger his reputation. Probably discipleship might be whole-hearted and yet secret in the case of Joseph. There was no need to avow it. Jesus had not formed an external society as yet. Therefore Joseph had not failed of any duty in not joining it. Nicodemus seems to have been content without giving himself up to be a disciple. He wanted to see his way more clearly. 'How can these things be?' was the form of question with him which made him hold interiorly as well as exteriorly aloof from the acceptance of Christ. The indifference of reason chilled in him the earnestness of heart; but there was a sincere desire of truth, however dull that desire might be. The death of Jesus has shaken his soul to its depths. Now he loses all the pride of his position. Perhaps it was a greater effort for him to join with Joseph in the act of burial than it was for Joseph to initiate it. Joseph, as a wealthy disciple of Jesus, would feel himself pledged to do what might be needful for his Master's honour. Nicodemus now came forward to own Him as his Master when dead, whom in life he had never so regarded.

O Jesu, grant that I may submit all my powers of mind to Thy teaching. Thou art the only Teacher, and all who teach truly must have learnt from Thee. Give me a childlike heart. O yes, dear Lord! a heart of love truly anxious above all things for Thy truth. The mere knowledge of the intellect avails nothing. My heart can find no satisfaction but in the

experience of Thy love. My soul is thirsting for that wisdom which Thou alone canst give. O let me die with Thy death to the wisdom of the world, that I may have my understanding illuminated in Thy grace with the wisdom of the Eternal Spirit.

My son, while thou knowest Me only after the flesh, it were all in vain, even if thou didst seek to be taught by Me. I am He that was dead, and is alive again. If thou seekest the heavenly wisdom from My lips, thou shalt not fail of acquiring it.

Dear Lord, Thy death teaches me what I could learn in no other way. When I consider Thy wisdom and compare with it all the learning of men, I see that all comes only to nothingness. Who can tell me of eternal truth who is himself a prisoner in this lower world? Thou art come hither from the Father, and into the Father's Hands Thou hast commended Thy Spirit, for Thou art the only begotten Son. Death is the limitation of all human knowledge and the gate of heavenly wisdom.

3. Jesus taken down from the Cross.

Consider how these two men came with the order from Pilate to receive the Body of Christ. The centurion in charge would have his faith strengthened. The soldiers who had mocked would be more amazed at receiving orders for reverence to be paid to the body of one who died as a traitor, than even by the wonders which had disturbed the material world around them. Two men, moreover, of high

position, belonging to the very council which had so eagerly pressed for the death of Jesus, are to be seen standing there and superintending the funeral, themselves by their very dress and demeanour so different from others around! We can scarcely doubt that St. John was along with them. It is not likely that Jewish women would have come forward on such an occasion. They would still be standing as spectators some way off.

O, the heartless insensibility of those Syrian soldiers as they took down the Body! But O, the tender reverence and awe with which Joseph and his companions received it!

We must remember that it would easily be taken down. While two were taking the nails out of the hands, another would be standing in front to take the Body from the seat as soon as it was loosened. Pictures represent the deposition with ladders and ropes, as if the Body were taken from a great height; but for this there would be no need.

How thoughtlessly and rudely had the Body been swung up to its place, while life remained! How sadly and wonderingly do the chief actors in the present scene watch that all shall be done with care!

The soldiers, no doubt, are looking for these rich men to give them some gratuity when the work is done!

Consider, perhaps, how the beloved disciple, as the youngest and strongest of the company, takes the Body in his arms, while Joseph holds up the head and Nicodemus the feet, so that they may lay it

upon the ground. Carefully they remove the crown of thorns. The wounds of the Body scarcely allow of their washing it, but they do what they can. The sponge is there, and the vessel full of vinegar, from which the soldier had given Him to drink. Reverently they wrap it round with Joseph's linen cloth, spreading over it the rich store of spices which Nicodemus has brought. The wounds of that Body are seen no more; but the disciples feel those wounds in their hearts, and shudder at the thought of their terrible reality.

See the Body now, swathed from head to foot, upon some bier that has been hastily prepared in order to carry it away. All has been done with love, but in great haste. The little company move away towards the neighbouring tomb. The women followed. O how hard was it for those mourners to disperse! Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses are left still sitting beside the sepulchre. The evening comes on, and the Sabbath dawns.

Is the bond which united these mourners altogether gone? No. There used to be a Divine Figure whom they had recognized as their Centre. Now an unseen power, a Divine mystery, girds them round. A sacred memory; more than that—a Presence that still is operative.

The Body which has been laid in the tomb is the Body of Christ. As the Body of Jesus, their thoughts turn towards it with personal affection. As the Body of Christ, the Holy Ghost still dwelling in Him breathes forth from His dead form with Divine power, personally keeping hold upon those who are

responsive to His love. The Father is drawing the faithful round about the Body of His Son, and stablishing them in such closeness of fellowship that death cannot separate them. Jesus is dead, but the gates of death have not triumphed. He is entered into the city of the dead as Conqueror. And still by His Holy Spirit His dead Body is a centre of power to those who are upon the earth.

May we not thus look forward to the time when, in the days of antichrist, the gates of hell shall have seemed to gain their victory? Yet even then the Divine power of the Body of Christ shall not have been lost, although it may seem that its human exercise has been hopelessly suspended. The faithful few shall be bound together in the unity of their Lord's imperishable life. He will keep them until the day when He shall appear again with all His saints in the glory of the New Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.

O Jesu, they who laid Thee in Thy sepulchre felt Thy sacred power. Thy Body sleeps, but Thy Soul waketh to those whom Thy Soul loveth. Yea, dear Lord, I also sleep! Alas, that I should be so heavy with the drowsiness of a sinful nature! Yet does my soul also wake to Thee by the grace which Thy Holy Spirit gives. All this dark world around me is but a sepulchre. Here I lie amidst the darkness of my sinful estate. But Thy Holy Spirit gives me the sweet consciousness of Thy love which quickens me. Already I see Thee in Divine mystery 'coming up out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh

and frankincense;' yet still Thy Body seems to be hushed in sleep. I would not that any of 'the daughters of Jerusalem should stir Thee up, nor waken Thee, until Thou please.' I wait for the day to dawn. Then shall I also come up with Thee 'from the wilderness, leaning upon Thee, My Beloved.'

O faithful soul, wait awhile. If thou, My son, art faithful, waiting upon Me, thou shalt renew thy strength. Together with My dead Body shalt thou arise. Let the world be thy sepulchre, and let Me be thy Life. 'The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.' Nevertheless, fear not. Even now death is vanquished. Amidst all terrors that are coming on the world, rest thou in perfect confidence with Me, for I have died to it. So shalt thou be witness when all enemies shall perish, and death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire, even the second death, and whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life.

So let me abide in the fellowship of Thy death, most blessed Jesu! Be Thou buried in my heart, that I may live through Thee. O blessed sepulchre, hallowed by the presence of Jesus! O blessed heart of mine, if Thou, O Lord, abidest with me, buried within me by a grace unseen, but acting with a living power; not present within me for a few days of death, but shining out more and more with an eternity of life!

MEDITATION LXXVI.

The Sepulchre.

Now on the morrow, which is *the day* after the Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest haply his disciples come and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: and the last error will be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a guard: go your way, make it *as* sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, the guard being with them.—St. Matt. xxvii. 62-66.

1. The Sanhedrists.

What an object of terror is the dead Body of Jesus to the powers of darkness! His Soul has triumphed in the region of the dead. The powers of evil will do what they can in the world which He has left.

The council of the Sanhedrim were not overawed by the terrible events of the preceding day. Manifestations of judgment will not soften those who are not moved by the appeal of mercy and love. They were maddened and blinded by the failure of their plans; for although they had obtained the sentence of death against Jesus, it was manifest that His followers were not subdued. The conduct of Joseph and Nicodemus showed them that they must be prepared for a reaction. They knew not how many were ready to raise a cry against them. The Paschal catastrophe in the Temple, the darkness, the rending of the veil, the earthquake, seemed to imply that they were at war with Heaven. Nothing, however,

must stop them. They were committed to a course, and must carry it out. As Pharaoh sent his armies into the Red Sea unchecked by the Divine intervention, so they press onward in their bitter enmity.

'Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good or to do evil?' They form their plans. The deputation is sent to Pilate. Angrily they have heard of the entombment. See the supercilious smile upon the face of the Governor while they lay their apprehensions before him. Doubtless he thought, or tried to think, that when he gave orders for the surrender of the Body to Joseph, he had heard the last of the matter. He was angry with the council for having involved him in this troublesome business, which made him ashamed of himself. He knew that he had abused his authority to the perversion of justice, and was glad to feel that the entombment was some little reparation. He now bids the Sanhedrists see to the matter themselves. They have a watch belonging to the Temple. They must go and do their best. 'Go your way, make it sure as ye know how.' He seems to speak with a half-consciousness that there is a Divine power behind all which will baffle them.

Like Saul's emissaries, who were watching to kill David at the time when he escaped out of the window (1 Sam. xix. 11), 'they return, and grin like a dog, and run about through the city' (Ps. lix. 14).

O what a Sabbath of evil counsel was that! 'Are your minds set upon righteousness, O ye congregation: and do ye judge the thing that is right, O ye sons of men? Yea, ye imagine mischief in your

heart upon the earth, and your hands deal with wickedness' (Ps. lviii. 1, 2).

So is it from age to age. The world is madly seeking to fortify itself against the people of God. It will not recognize the Divine Presence which is with the Church in her times of greatest overthrow, which is ready also to assert itself on behalf of God's people just when all our outward powers of help have failed.

It is not wonderful that the world should act in such a way. We need not fear their precautions. If our powers are not sustained by God, they can avail nothing. If God is really our Reliance, we may be sure that the violence of the enemy only serves to call Him forth into action.

It is wonderful how slow we are to acknowledge God during such times of difficulty. It is our own want of faith which holds God back from interfering on our behalf. While enemies of various kinds are plotting against us, we must rest undisturbed in the keeping of God. Their efforts can never disturb our hearts if we are really buried along with Christ. O let us feel that there is a resurrection in store; that God never permits any overthrow without having a proportionate glorification to follow! The unbelieving know that so it should be. We are not worthy of the name of believers, because we are so unready to anticipate that thus it will be.

How anxious were these Sanhedrists not to let the Body of Christ be taken from the sepulchre by His disciples! Jesus has warned us that His Presence will be taken away from our hearts by the

powers of darkness if we are not watchful. The Jews did as Pilate said. They set their watch. Am I doing what Jesus said? Am I setting a watch? I am sometimes tempted to deplore that there is no longer the outward Presence of Jesus with His Church, working miracles of beneficent power, as when He raised Lazarus from the dead. Much better is it for me to have His secret Presence dwelling by grace in my heart, that after the time of trial He may raise me along with Himself from the dead. Yet, if I am not careful to guard that secret Presence, I cannot share in that manifestation of glory.

O Jesu, Thou hast given me Thy Holy Spirit that I may guard Thy Presence within me. Thou art buried within me, but Thou livest within me by that Holy Spirit. Grant that I may watch over Thee to retain Thee by the power of that same Holy Spirit whereby Thou ever retainest hold of me. Let me not seek for signs of Thy Presence, but abide in Thy power. Let me keep Thee now, and Thou shalt keep me in the day of trial that cometh upon the earth, and in the day of resurrection.

Even so, My son. I have told thee that I am with thee, and I am the Lord of life. Death cannot keep Me under its power. Thou must keep Me by the Spirit of life. Thou canst not keep Me if thou art dead.

O Lord, no power can take Thee from me, but mine own unfaithfulness can make Thee withdraw Thyself. Amidst all the dangers that beset me in this present life, let me live to Thee and rest secure in the conscious-

ness of Thine indwelling. Let me not fear what others may do who know Thee not. No outward violence can harm us if Thou remain. Nothing that the world can do can hinder the operation of Thy grace in the day of Thy glory. Grant me by Thy Holy Spirit so to keep myself that the wicked one may not touch me, and so to wait for Thy manifestation that no devices of the world may make me afraid.

2. The Military Watch.

The High Priest had a Temple-guard at his disposal. These could be sent to watch the sepulchre.

They were to guard the new and the true Temple instead of that which had ceased to be. How little did any of those concerned in the matter know that they had instead destroyed the Temple, and that Jesus would raise up in three days another Temple made without hands! That Temple is not made with hands, neither can the hands of man stay its uprising or its growth.

The soldiers take their place, and night comes on.

They knew not what all this was to issue in. We know something of the mystery of the grace of Christ, and yet, alas! we do not come to watch beside it. Surely the soldiers of Christ ought to watch beside His grave. Surely they who look for Him to come again ought to watch, not so as to be driven away in fear by His manifestation, but watching, praying, looking for the glorious manifestation which is to be the consummation of our hopes.

And yet how do we remain listless through the

night! The night is far spent now. We ought to be expecting the outburst of the morning very soon. The soldiers of Jesus slept in Gethsemane. The world's soldiers are awake in hostility to Him beside His grave.

The soldiers were to guard the Body of Christ; and yet not out of love, but hatred. How ought we to guard His Church from all assaults! We have to keep His spiritual Presence within ourselves. We have to defend His Church, lest by any pretence the sacred deposit may be taken away. To the world the deposit of the faith seems to be a dead thing. We must remember its Divine life, and however much it may seem that the Voice of Christ in His Church is hushed, we must not let any take away our confidence therein, but we must look for Him to arise and show Himself in the fulness of power when the world least expects it.

The soldiers watched through the night, until at midnight the cry arose, 'The Bridegroom cometh!' Those Syrian soldiers knew not what to expect, and hastened to their superiors in great affright with the extraordinary intelligence. How must they have been amazed when those Sanhedrists, instead of surrendering themselves to the supernatural event, urged them to tell a lie! This was a worse blindness than the blindness which made them put Jesus to death.

If we watch beside the grave of Christ, we are not to think that the world would submit to any miraculous evidence, even if we had it to present to them. The world may jeer. Let us wait and watch till midnight comes.

While we meditate upon our Lord's Passion, and seek to apply it to our own circumstances, we must be looking forward, not to any future of earthly life, but to His second coming in glory. So our Lord bids us celebrate the Divine mystery of Redemption in remembrance of Himself until He come.

O Jesu, keep me watchful as one of Thy true soldiers, lest while I slumber there should be any assault of darkness robbing me of Thy Presence. Surely Thou wilt make Thyself manifest to Thine elect in ways that the world knows not. Never let me deny Thy truth, but patiently let me wait for Thy glory.

My son, watch thou beside Me. Yet be not with the soldiers outside the sealed stone. They guarded a seal which the world had set. Thou must take thy place within My tomb, and angels waiting upon My Body shall be thy companions. Let faith still see My Body, and hope look forward for the display of majesty, when all My faithful soldiers shall be partakers of My kingdom. Love meanwhile must seal the chamber; yet not to keep thee out, but to keep thee in. Thou shalt find how true are all My words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

O Lord, as I continue in the world, let me remember always that I am one of Thy chosen body-guard, and in every place I must be mindful of Thy mysterious Presence with me, yea, within me. Lord, I will abide

at Thy tomb until the morning cometh, and I know that the morning cometh when there shall no longer be any night.

3. The Sabbath.

The enemies of Christ have been busy during this Sabbath. The disciples 'rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.' What sadness of heart was theirs! Doubtless they met in various groups, and joined together in various offices of prayer at stated times in the Temple. But O, how changed is everything! They know not yet the power of this Death to abolish death. They know not how mysteriously God is now resting from the painful work of Redemption, as formerly from the glorious work of Creation.

This is the great Sabbath. Now for the first time man rests in God. It is a Sabbath which shall have no days of toil to follow. It shall be merged without shades of evening in Resurrection-joy. It is a Sabbath in which He who rests is carrying on a greater work than when He was working with His Father merely in the maintenance of the order of nature. Now His Body, opened on the Cross, is a Principle of active grace. As God and Man, He is calling mankind to enter into the same rest, drawing them, illuminating them, strengthening them. The Spirit of power is with Him, and shall gather into Him multitudes to find in Him their Rest, even while they are outwardly suffering in the world. This Sabbath is a perfect rest from evil passion.

The soul that takes refuge in this grave shall experience the sweetness of Divine life. He who is laid therein suffered for us, that we might find a true Sabbath, a perfect Rest, in Him.

The grave of Jesus is not a place where life is extinguished, but wherein it is renewed. Our nature, suffering in this evil world, does not cease to be. It loses not its personal identity. It is transformed, developed, purified, glorified, deified. Jesus partook of our corruptible nature, but saw no corruption. We, as the heirs of corruption, are buried with Him, that we may partake of the incorruptibility wherein He lives. Death is henceforth to be the primary condition of life, not by the loss of personal consciousness or sensible enjoyment, but by deliverance from all the defilement of corruptibility which weighed down the incorruptible soul. Christ has been made sin for us, and subject to the death which was our doom, that sin might die within us, and we might be made the Righteousness of God, as partakers of His eternal, imperishable Life. The waters of the Red Sea separated the Israelites from the Egyptians who perished therein; and we are buried with Christ by Baptism into His death, that we may henceforth be free from the tyranny of sin. So does God acknowledge us in Christ as the true Israel, so as to be 'His son, even His firstborn' (Exod. iv. 22).

O Jesu, let me rest in Thy grave, that I may live with the life that is eternal, and be dead to all that is subject to death; and let my life on earth be one continued Sabbath in the sweetness of Thy Holy

Sepulchre, that I may rise along with Thee in the fruition of Thy glorious Resurrection.

O My son, as My Body rested in the grave sustained by the power of the Holy Ghost, so rest thou in Me. In the Flesh I suffered, and in the Flesh I rested when My suffering was complete. Do thou, whilst suffering in the flesh, seek the tranquillity which the grace of My Body shall communicate. Abide thou in My death whilst living in the world, so shalt thou be partaker of My life in perfect freedom from the powers of darkness. I have stretched forth Mine Hand, and the earth hath swallowed up all thine enemies. Now will I guide thee in My strength unto My holy habitation.

'O Lord God Almighty, great and marvellous are Thy works; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.' As Thou hast loved us, and given Thyself for our redemption, help me to love Thee, that I may have my portion for ever with Thy redeemed.

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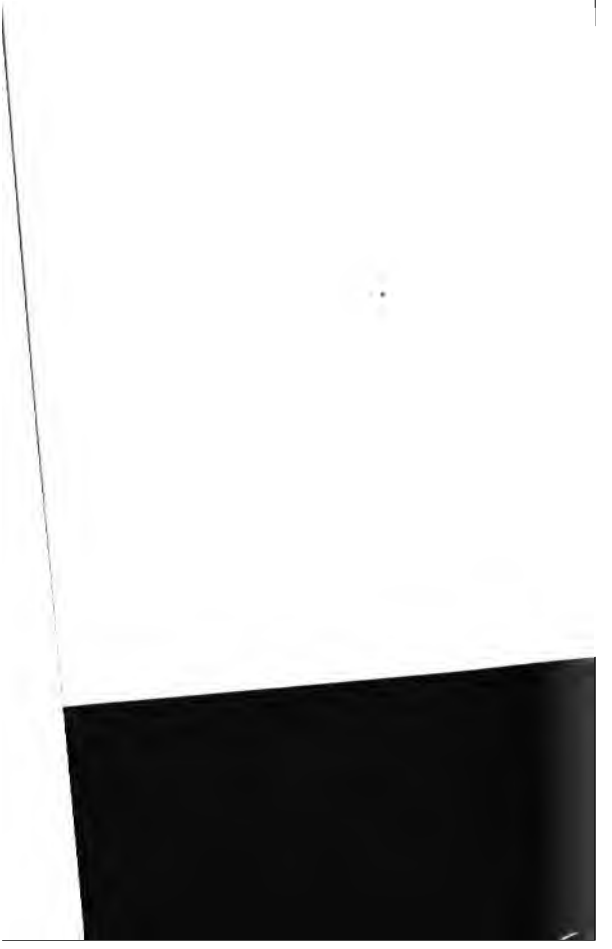

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